

# The Historic Jesus

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Charles Stanley Lester



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Section 16





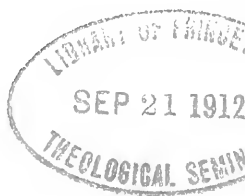






# The Historic Jesus

A Study of the Synoptic Gospels



By

Charles Stanley Lester

Die Gestalt Jesu Christi ist heute durch die geschichtliche Entwicklung der Kirchen  
eher verdunkelt und ferngerückt als unserm klarschauenden Auge enthüllt.

*Houston Chamberlain.*

Ohne Wahrheit kann man auf die Dauer nicht leben.—*Friedrich Andersen.*

G. P. Putnam's Sons  
New York and London  
The Knickerbocker Press

1912

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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

To

MY WIFE

MY INSPIRATION FOR FORTY YEARS

AND

A RADIANT CENTRE OF LIGHT AND JOY TO ALL WHO  
KNEW AND LOVED HER



## PREFACE

**I**N the year 1902, a lady at an hotel table in Florence, discussing the changes which the broadening of knowledge was making necessary in the religious traditions of the world, exclaimed in a tone which betrayed the anxious consciousness of responsibility—"What am I to teach my boys?"

To the author the question seemed like a personal challenge and, although he had been actively engaged in the work of the Christian ministry for thirty years, it was impossible to answer it by reference to traditional beliefs, as upheld by various ecclesiastical authorities, since they were the very things in question.

He therefore took the matter very much to heart and, as he had acquired leisure for study by the resignation of the rectorship of St. Paul's Church, Milwaukee, after twenty-two years of service, the way of duty seemed clear to become once more a learner, and to acquire for his own benefit, and then for the benefit of others, such more intelligent solutions of many religious problems as is made possible by the larger scholarship of the present day.

It soon became evident that the most important of all religious questions were those which cluster about the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, that, sharing his wonderful faith, acquiring some of his moral intuitions, and entering into his hope for humanity, the

Christian world may develop the power of a new enthusiasm from its inheritance of his own larger perceptions of the meaning, the value, and the purposes of life.

Before this is possible it is necessary to clear away the misinterpretations of his life and work which have come down to us from Jewish and pagan sources, and herein we are greatly aided by the work of a multitude of scholars, mostly Germans, which has been devoted to this study during nearly a hundred years.

The Higher Criticism of the Scriptures has been like the dawn of a great new light upon the Christian world, dissipating the darkness of the ages, showing the origins and relations of things, and dissolving many barriers to the religious progress of mankind. For the multitude the light still shines in the darkness and yet people do not love darkness because, as an ancient writer once thought, their deeds are evil; but they have been the unfortunate victims of blind guides and have been taught to fear the light as a dangerous thing which would lead them astray.

An occasional glimmer, breaking here and there through the crust of prejudice, has produced the present chaos in the Christian world, making it easy for a multitude of men to enumerate the many things which they do not believe, but leaving them all at sea as to the helpful and positive things which they ought to believe.

It would seem, therefore, as if the time had come when it was the duty and privilege of those who have lived for a while in the sunlight of a larger truth to take as many as possible of their fellow-men into their confidence, showing them in the simple splendour of the truth which makes men free the joy and power of a new life for the world, and the new inspirations which



religion has in store when it shall be freed from the blunders of the past and delivered from all such control by authority as, in attempting to foster it, has generally hindered its progress among men.

It is the purpose of this work, therefore, to discover as far as may be the real Jesus of history back of the interpretations of his life and work with which we are familiar in the Gospels, that, relieved of the drapery of mythology and set free from all dogmatic fictions, he may be recognised as the permanent source of the moral power of the world.

It is the search for the real Jesus back of the letter of the Gospel narratives which causes many people to denounce the Higher Criticism as "Destructive Criticism" and it certainly is destructive, but it is the kind of destruction which in crushing the ore allows the recovery of the gold, or in grinding the wheat sets free the life-giving flour, or in removing the staging discloses the symmetry of a noble building; and, when the Higher Criticism shall have completed its work, it will be found to have been vastly reconstructive, for it will have put the grander realities of life upon the solid rock of truth, instead of leaving the religious beliefs of the Christian world to be propped up by the decaying timbers of authority and tradition.

In the study of the Gospels it has seemed expedient to take the amended text and translation of Wellhausen, with the division into sections and the showing of parallel passages as arranged by him.

As the basis of his study is Mark's Gospel, which did not include the collection of the "Sayings of Jesus," as they were given in the later Gospels, which bear the names of Luke and Matthew, our study does not cover a minute examination of his teaching, but only of so

much of it as is necessary for an understanding of his attitude, beliefs, expectations, and efforts, confining itself chiefly to the recovery of the historic Jesus from the mass of legends and misinterpretations which have so long kept him hidden behind a cloud of unreality.

The book is written especially for intelligent laymen who have neither the time nor the training for special studies, that they may know what is going on in the great world of sober and intelligent thought, and so be won to help instead of hindering the larger progress of the world.

There are plenty of books written for scholars, and thousands of men, in the quiet isolation of their studies, as much separated from their fellow-men as though they were monks in a cloister, are enjoying the brightness of a larger vision, while the world about them plods along in the ruts of by-gone centuries.

Some of the clergy, too, are familiar with the results of scholarship, but it is impossible for them to take the people into their confidence and to tell them the truth, and their position is a grievous one, since they are doubly fettered. The various Church authorities hold them to the established standards of the past, while in every congregation a troublesome minority is always on the watch for "heresy" and resists every invitation to rearrange its mental furniture by the slow and painful processes of thought.

It is evident, therefore, that the hope of religion for the future depends very largely upon the laymen. When a goodly number of them shall have absorbed the light that is now shining in the darkness they will demand the emancipation of the clergy, who, once delivered from ecclesiastical control and unfettered by theology, will become actual teachers of the people and

leaders in the development of the human mind towards clearer perceptions of truth.

Our study cannot be dogmatic and does not assume to be final. A student can never be dogmatic and he who has grown somewhat into the spirit of Jesus must be forever teachable. Dogmas are obstacles to truth, since they are nothing but the petrified speculations of past ages blocking the way of life.

Since the advent of the scientific spirit, dogmatic statements have fallen into discredit in all departments of learning, and with genuine humility men are ever more ready to leave the lesser perceptions of the past, as they press forward to the larger knowledge of the future; nor is there any finality, for the human mind can never become infinite in its perception of truth, a fact which is full of encouragement, since, if it were not so, there would come a time in the eternal life of the soul when it would be exposed to the burden of a hopeless ennui.

Truth is, therefore, for us not all truth and absolute truth, but an approximation thereto, the result of an adjustment between our perceptions and external realities. The best of our efforts must tend to make the approximation closer and the adjustment more accurate while we realise that our work is a contribution and not a finality, a contribution which, if it be genuine, erects a new milestone in the progress of humanity, but a milestone which will be left far behind in the sure progress of the world towards a better knowledge of things as they are and have been and a larger hope for human life as it will be.

It is in this spirit that we enter upon the study of the Gospels, hoping that our perceptions of the historic Jesus may be clearer than those of the men who were

obliged to interpret him through the mists of the Jewish and pagan religions and that, with the débris of old religions cast aside, the religion of Jesus may have its opportunities enlarged, becoming in reality the light and power by which men live, winning them in the actual love of God and a realised brotherhood of man to an intelligent and organised culture in human society of the things that are true and beautiful and good.

C. S. L.

WASHINGTON, October, 1911.

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# The Historic Jesus

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## INTRODUCTION

### THE SOURCES

VIRTUALLY our only sources for any knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus are the four Gospels, an intelligent understanding of which was impossible so long as the whole Christian world held the belief concerning them which the Scribes had invented and the Pharisees had disseminated with reference to the Jewish Scriptures, that they were supernatural and infallible documents. But since the battle of scholarship has been fought and won, except where some form of ecclesiasticism still maintains its power over the ignorant, it has been recognised that the Gospels are literature, subject to the same canons of criticism as have yielded such beneficent results when applied to other literary treasures from the ancient world. When the way was thus opened for their intelligent study, a flood of questions arose—Where were they written, by whom, are they works of eye-witnesses, are they purely historical writings by competent authors, or were they written to defend certain popular beliefs? Have we the originals, or only late

copies which show evidences of both manipulation and carelessness? These and many other questions have engaged the patient labour of a multitude of scholars during the past hundred years, some of them exerting their efforts to maintain traditional interpretations and others seeking only to get as near to the truth and the facts as possible; and it is safe to say that, in the whole range of the human search for knowledge, nothing has been studied so patiently, minutely, or intelligently as the four Gospels. The end is not yet and all problems are not solved, but some of them are, while the solution of others has reached a high degree of probability. Avoiding the long and tedious history of criticism, we accept such results as are already established and such probabilities as seem to have the best foundations.

The three oldest existing copies of the Gospels are the Sinaiticus, the Alexandrinus, and the Vaticanus, the first and third probably from the fourth century, the second from the fifth. Our earliest surviving record is therefore more than three hundred years younger than the events narrated, a lapse of time which allows abundant opportunity for many careless blunders of copyists and for the slipping of many marginal notes into the text, while there is evidence from the text itself that in much earlier days than the date of these copies changes were made and whole passages interpolated.

While, however, these manuscripts are the earliest existing copies of the Gospels, their existence at a much earlier date and virtually as we know them to-day is proved from the works of the Church Fathers, who, fortunately, were prolific writers and made abundant quotations from the Gospels. Following this thread through the mazes of patristic literature, it is possible



to trace the first three Gospels back to the year 120 A.D. and the fourth to the year 150 A.D., before which date there is no evidence that it was known.

This brings us to the greatest of the problems of New Testament criticism, the question as to the date and authorship of the fourth Gospel and its value as an historical document, the most bitterly fought of all the battles aroused by the study of the Scriptures and which has as yet reached only the stage of a drawn battle, the scholars rejecting it and ecclesiastical authorities retaining it as a source of history, because so much of the traditional theology is based upon it.

When we compare the four Gospels one with another, we find that the first three tell virtually the same story, for which reason they are called "Synoptic," while the fourth tells a totally different one, so different and in the main so contradictory that we cannot accept both accounts as historical and must choose between them.

Avoiding minor details, the two chief points of difference have to do with the scene of the work of Jesus and the matter of his teaching. In the Synoptic Gospels his work is wholly in Galilee until the last week of his life, in the fourth Gospel it is almost entirely in and about Jerusalem.

In the Synoptic Gospels he proclaims the coming of the Kingdom of God and devotes himself to the winning of men, especially those who were unfortunate, discouraged, and despised, to a glad preparation for citizenship in the coming Kingdom.

In the fourth Gospel he discourses about himself as a mysterious and supernatural being, and passes in solemn dignity across the stage of life, declaring that the majority of the Jews were children of their father the Devil,

while his sheep heard his voice and knew and followed him.

Instead of trying to reconcile these differences, which is impossible, it is necessary to explain them, and this explanation is to be found in the different objects, as shown by the Gospels themselves, for which they were written. The earliest Gospel, which is Mark's, and which was afterwards incorporated into those which bear the names of Luke and Matthew, was written to persuade Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. The fourth Gospel, on the other hand, was written to win converts to the Church, which was becoming well established in the second century, among the Greeks, by attempting to harmonise Christian beliefs with the philosophical speculations then prevalent in Alexandria and Ephesus. Since the Jews had been brought into contact with Greek civilisation through the conquests of Alexander the Great a minority had taken to speculating and, acquiring to some extent cosmopolitan sympathies, had undertaken to reconcile the traditional beliefs of Judaism with some of the elements of Greek philosophy. The most illustrious exponent of this tendency had been Philo, who was a contemporary of Jesus and taught in Alexandria, where he had attempted to show that Moses was the human source of all wisdom, both Jewish and Greek, and that the Jewish personification of Wisdom as the chief agent of God was identical with the world-reason of the Stoics and the divine "Logos," "Word," or "Reason," of Plato. Out of this theorising had arisen the Logos of Philo, the most majestic and fascinating personification ever created by the genius of man, destined to become the cornerstone of great systems and to make its charm felt through uncounted generations of the children of men.

Lesser men took it up and, in the chaotic flux of old religions which characterised the first three centuries of the Christian era, wove it into the fantastic systems of Gnosticism, which bid for adherents among the shepherdless multitudes of a distracted world. But within the Church itself there was, already in the second century, a growing system of Gnosticism struggling for recognition as orthodox and denouncing the "oppositions of Gnosticism, which is falsely so called" (1 Tim. vi, 20). Some one, whose name was lost to posterity, essayed the bold and wonderful task of holding fast to his Christian beliefs while maintaining his adherence to the ideas of Philo, thus both bridging the gulf between Christian beliefs and the dominant speculative thought and defeating all rival Gnosticisms by making their most attractive feature the chief article of Christian belief, writing a Gospel to prove that the actual Jesus, whom men had seen and known but little more than a hundred years before, was the veritable "Logos," "Reason," "Word," who had existed from all eternity in the presence of God and was himself a God, the only-begotten Son of his Father, the supreme agent in creation and the light of all human intelligence. Thus the ground was cut away from all beliefs of earlier Christian days. Jesus was no longer a Jewish Messiah, either by miraculous endowment at the time of his baptism, or by descent from David; no longer a Son of God by a human mother, in accordance with many pagan analogies, but a philosophical abstraction made man. The Gospel written in furtherance of this belief cannot be recognised as a work of history nor as supplying valuable data for a sober reconstruction of history. Although the author assumes that the "Word" made flesh was identical with

the historic Jesus and apparently gives an historical narrative, yet he makes very free use of abundant quotations from the Gospels of Mark and Luke and from a third source, which may have been the Gospel according to the Hebrews, converting the simpler narratives into evidences for his theme and adding accounts of miracles not before heard of in illustration of the unlimited power of the incarnate Reason of the World. Not only is it impossible to admit the fourth Gospel as a source for reliable data of history, but the long-established tradition that the Apostle John was its author has become no longer tenable. It was Irenæus, a very careless and unreliable writer, who first made the statement, about 180 A.D., that John was the author of the Gospel as well as of the Epistles which bear his name, and of the Book of Revelation, and all Christendom until recently has blindly accepted his statement as true. To-day, however, a little intelligent reading of the book itself shows an anti-Jewish spirit, far beyond Paul's theory of the breaking down of the barrier between Jew and Gentile, whereas Paul, in an epistle of undoubted genuineness, shows that John was one of the three "pillars" in Jerusalem full of the strongest Jewish prejudices. The strong anti-Jewish spirit among the Christians did not display itself until towards the middle of the second century, nor could any writer have incorporated into a book such terms as "Only begotten," "Logos," "Pleroma" and the division of men into God's children and Devil's children under the rival Kingdoms of Light and Darkness, until they had been made familiar by the Gnostic system of Saturninus, Basilides, and Cerinthus, not before the year 140 A.D. We must conclude for these reasons, and there are many more, that the fourth

Gospel is a philosophical and polemical work of an unknown author, not much if any earlier than the year 150 A.D., written with the bold intention of breaking a way through the wilderness of confusing beliefs by identifying the Logos of speculation with the Jesus of history. Therefore, while it is a work of genius, interesting as seen in its historical setting, and a rich pasture of mysticism, it is not historical and its statements are not available as the data of sober history.

We are thrown back, therefore, upon the Synoptic Gospels and new questions arise. Are they three separate transcripts of an original tradition, or did each use an original Gospel now lost? Each theory has had abundant advocates, but both have been found to be untenable.

The only remaining theory is that one of the three was written before the other two and became the basis for them. The question is—which? For a long time it was held that Matthew's was the earliest Gospel, but long and careful study has shown that this is impossible, while to-day, among all unprejudiced scholars, it is recognised that Mark's Gospel, substantially as we have it to-day, with the exception of the last twelve verses, was the earliest written Gospel. It is written in a sort of Aramaic-Greek, such a patois as a Jew living in Palestine would have picked up from uneducated Greek-speaking people, and this is a strong evidence of its originality, for no one would have translated either a better Greek nor an Aramaic original Gospel into such a hybrid tongue. There is apparently good historic ground, therefore, for the statement by Papias, about 150 A.D., that Mark wrote his Gospel from recollections of what he had heard Peter narrate, although the account was rendered suspicious by later

embellishments. The Gospel itself bears evidence that the writer was influenced by the theories of Paul, but reflected mainly in his writing the original belief of the Jewish Christians that Jesus was the Messiah and that his object in writing was to win converts to that belief.

When we turn to the Gospels which bear the names of Luke and Matthew we find that they contain very nearly the entire Gospel by Mark, with some changes by way of improving the language and others in the interest of later beliefs. They contain also much matter which is not found in the Gospel by Mark, consisting mostly of short sayings and parables attributed to Jesus. The question is—where did the authors discover this material? Here again there would seem to be no reason for doubting the statement of Papias that Matthew, otherwise called Levi, one of the original disciples of Jesus, who had formerly been a tax-collector for Herod Antipas, had made a collection of the “Sayings” of Jesus. Among those who went out in the early days to preach the new belief in Palestine there must have been various treasures of the things which Jesus had said and taught, each collection growing by itself as new traditions were encountered and each containing special features of its own. It is highly probable that some one, quite as likely to be Matthew as any one else, made a collection of these separate deposits of tradition and then that he, or some one borrowing his name, adding a few facts from the story of the life of Jesus, wove them into a continuous narrative and so put forth an original Aramaic Gospel about the year 75 A.D. This, then, or something very like it, would be the principal source from which the “Sayings” of Jesus found their way into the later

Gospels which bear the names of Luke and Matthew. The problem as to which of these Gospels is the earlier is by no means settled. Names of great weight and arguments of great skill advocate the claims of both for precedence, but the recognition that there must have been an earlier Gospel, which bore the name of Matthew and was lost after the later Matthew made its appearance, will help much towards its solution. This Gospel, written in Aramaic for use in Palestine, would reflect the strong spirit of Judaism which characterised the Christians of the Jewish race. For Gentile Christians there was for a long time only the Gospel written by Mark and written, as already stated, in very poor Greek. About a generation after its publication a writer in Rome, of poetic temperament, gentle disposition, and much literary ability, conceived the idea of writing a Gospel for the benefit of pagan Christians, which should not only be in better Greek than the Gospel by Mark, but which should also contain the collection of the "Sayings" of Jesus, which were the special treasure of the Gospels of Palestine.

He found many other sources, as he states in his prologue, besides the original Gospel which bore the name of Mark and the one containing the "Sayings" which bore the name of Matthew, which accounts for several features which his Gospel and the later Matthew do not have in common. There were many Gospels current among the Jewish Christians which never came into use among the Greek-speaking people of the growing Church and gradually dropped out entirely as the Gospels in Greek proved their greater fitness to survive. The most widely circulated among them was the Gospel according to the Hebrews, but there were also those of the Ebionites, the Egyptians, of Peter,

Thomas, and others, of many of which more or less extensive fragments still survive.

The writer of this new Gospel produced a charming work, but in it he sometimes sacrificed the facts of history to literary effect and idealised the Jesus of the Gospel by Mark, softening down the features of the bold reformer of Judaism and the active enemy of legalism, externalism, and hypocrisy in religion into those of the gentle and inoffensive friend of sinful and suffering humanity. The author does not give his name. Late in the second century men said that it was Luke, and a complacent Christian world has been satisfied to call it Luke ever since. For the sake of convenience it will still be necessary to give that name to the unknown author, understanding that the real Luke was probably the author of the narrative of Paul's journey to Rome, in which he included himself among the company by the use of the pronoun "we," and that the later author of both the Gospel and the Book of Acts incorporated that document in his work. If, as has been shown to be highly probable, the author was familiar with the works of Josephus, which were not completed until the close of the first century, he could not have written his Gospel before that date.

There remains for consideration the Gospel which bears the name of Matthew, the problem of which is the more complicated by reason of the serious contradictions which it contains, since it is at once broad and narrow, legal and spiritual, Jewish and anti-Jewish. This strange problem is best explained by recognising the Gospel as the attempt of a writer in Rome to harmonise the tendencies of the Aramaic and Greek Gospels and the Semitic and Aryan interpretations of the new religion. As the attempt at harmony would not



be undertaken until men had become conscious of the differences as seriously antagonistic and mutually exclusive, it is impossible to assign an early date to the Gospel which bears the name of Matthew, a conclusion which is much strengthened as we realise its ecclesiastical and legal tendencies, which were also impossible before the growing Church had acquired a well-developed organisation and many had learned to consider the new religion as a new legalism in place of the older Judaism. As these conditions were not established until the second century was well under way it is impossible to place the date of the Gospel which bears the name of Matthew earlier than the year 120 A.D.

The recognition of two Gospels which bore the name of Matthew solves most of the problems, and it would appear that a writer in Rome took the older Gospel which bore that name and rewrote it, retaining the name, both incorporating into it ideas borrowed from the Greek Gospels and adjusting it to ecclesiastical beliefs and customs which had been gaining strength in Rome since the early years of the second century. This would account for the strange contradictions which make the Gospel seem at once early and late. This writer quoted naïvely from both sources without any real attempt at harmonising them.

Summing up our too brief examination of the sources, it seems most probable, until more light is thrown upon the problems, that, as regards:

*Matthew*, there was an Aramaic Gospel, which bore his name and contained a collection of the "Sayings" of Jesus by the real Matthew, written in Judæa about the year

75 A.D.

*Mark* was written in Aramaic-Greek by  
 John Mark, a companion of Peter and  
 Paul, in Alexandria or Rome, about 67 A.D.

*Luke* was the work of an unknown author  
 and was written in Rome soon after 100 A.D.

*Matthew*, on the basis of an earlier Matthew,  
 was written by an unknown author in  
 Rome not before 120 A.D.

There were, however, alterations and interpolations in all of the Gospels after these dates and the text did not acquire a fixed form, which was recognised as of canonical authority, until about the year 175 A.D. It will be necessary in the following pages to refer to the Gospels which bear the names of Luke and Matthew by the names of their traditional authors.

#### THE CHRONOLOGY

Accurate chronological data for the life of Jesus are entirely lacking. Mark, who wrote the earliest Gospel, made no statement as to when he was born for the simple reason that no one knew. The only connection of Jesus with actual history which he gives is in the account of the crucifixion, which he says took place under Pontius Pilate. This establishes the date of the crucifixion at some time between 27 and 37 A.D., during which time Pontius Pilate was Procurator of Judæa, Samaria, and Idumæa. "Luke," writing a generation later, recognised the deficiency and undoubtedly did his best to ascertain the facts, which was not only difficult, but well-nigh impossible, a hundred years after the events and at a great distance from Palestine.

The statement which he makes in the third chapter of his Gospel shows that he must have made diligent inquiry, as the result of which he fixes upon the 15th year of Tiberius as the time when Jesus was "about thirty years of age." This is very unsatisfactory according to modern methods of writing history, but it is as near the facts as we shall ever get, assuming that Luke was correctly informed. Tiberius became emperor August 19th in the year 14 A.D. The fifteenth year would therefore be from August, 28 A.D. to August, 29 A.D. If the fractional year at the beginning of his reign should be reckoned as a whole year, as was often done, we should have the year 28, but, reckoned according to actual years, we should have the year 29, as the one in which Jesus was about thirty years old. Some of the other dates given by Luke agree with this. Pontius Pilate, as already stated, was procurator from 27 to 37 A.D., so that the public work of Jesus, at about thirty years of age, would have fallen within his term of office. Herod Antipas was Tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa from 4 B.C., to 39 or 40 A.D. This agrees with the other dates. Philip was Tetrarch of Ituræa and Trachonitis from 4 B.C., to 33 A.D. This also agrees. Lysanias had been Tetrarch of Abilene, but had been executed in the year 34 B.C. His dominion, however, went by his name, until Caligula bestowed it upon Agrippa I in the year 53 A.D., which accounts for the error of Luke. The mention of two High-Priests is inaccurate, as there never could be but one High-Priest at a time. Caiaphas was the actual High-Priest, but his father-in-law, Annas, had held the office and was still the power behind the throne. All these dates show that Luke had taken pains to fix as nearly as possible the time of the public work of Jesus, with the

result that, in all probability, he entered upon it in the year 28 and was then about thirty years of age. There was a later tradition, as shown in the legends prefixed to the first and third Gospels, that Herod the Great was still alive at the time when Jesus was born. As Herod died in the year 4 B.C. this is quite possible and would make Jesus thirty-two or thirty-three years old at the time when he entered upon his public work, which would be in sufficient accord with the statement that he was about thirty years old at the time. It would have been interesting to have had greater accuracy and yet it is not a matter of serious importance. The really important fact may be considered as satisfactorily established that Jesus was a real character of history, a fact which has sometimes been denied both in ancient and modern times, and that his life has an actual setting within well-defined historical limits.

The question as to how long his work among the people lasted also cannot be solved with entire satisfaction. The Synoptic Gospels mention only one Passover which he attended, and one might conclude from this fact that he had not been to Jerusalem before the last week of his life and that his whole work was confined within a single year. Luke assigns to him an impossible address at Nazareth at the beginning of his ministry, in which he is made to quote from the second Isaiah the words—"the acceptable year of the Lord." In the second century the Valentinian Gnostics fixed upon this passage as proving that his work was confined to a single year and that opinion has been the prevailing one ever since, although the fourth Gospel mentions two other Passovers before the final one at which Jesus was present and possibly suggests a third. The writer of the fourth Gospel may certainly have discovered a

true tradition as to visits to Jerusalem in previous years. While the earlier Gospels do not mention earlier visits, they do not deny them. In fact they contain suggestions which make them seem probable, for they show that Jesus had friends in and about Jerusalem, while his saying, as reported in the first and third Gospel—"how oft would I have gathered thee"—must refer to visits in earlier years. The parable of the fig-tree, too, in which occur the words, "Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree and find none," is in all probability a parable from the actual experience of Jesus.

When we consider also the excitement which his preaching created throughout the whole of Galilee and beyond and then the gradual defection of the entire multitude, except a small band of devotees, under the influence of the Scribes and Pharisees, a year seems all too short a time for movements on so large a scale, and it is reasonable to conclude that his public ministry occupied at least three years, which would make the year 32 A.D. very probable as the year of the crucifixion.

#### THE BELIEF IN A MESSIAH

The belief in a Messiah, as it existed among the Jewish people at the time of Jesus, had been growing among them for about a hundred and fifty years. Before that time there was no such belief, nor do the canonical Jewish Scriptures, commonly known among us as the Old Testament, contain the slightest reference to it.

We find in the writings of the prophets anticipations and promises of a restoration of the kingdom, after the punishment of the people for their transgressions.

Centuries later, when notions concerning a Messiah had grown up, the new notions were identified with the earlier expectations, but not without much clumsy ingenuity of misconstruction and a total lack of any historical consciousness.

The prophets were zealous for the worship of Jahveh, whom they represented as angry with the people of Israel and Judah, not only for their worship of other gods, but also for their general immorality and their constant oppression and spoliation of the poor. The little kingdoms in Palestine and the neighbouring lands, exposed as they were to Egypt on the one side and the great empires on the Euphrates on the other, were all destined both to be the frequent battle-ground of rival nations and eventually to be ground to pieces beneath the devastating army of a conqueror. Probably the prophets realised this, and yet they found it convenient to make use of the frequent calamities which befell their land for the furtherance of their propaganda. Jahveh, they said, had devised and arranged the successive invasions and desolations as punishments for their moral shortcomings and their neglect of his worship; but, if the people would only repent and reform, he would withhold his hand and either divert the punishment or at least shorten the time of the "woes," and, in any case, he would not entirely destroy the people, but after sifting out the wicked would save and restore the remnant to greater power and prosperity than before. This was the general program upon which all the prophets were agreed, chastisement, reform, a remnant, and a restoration. Each filled in the details of the picture in accordance with his individual temperament and the conditions under which he wrote, but the general impression which they all gave was that

the kingdom would be restored very much as in David's time, and that a descendant of David would win the final victory and establish among the Jews the permanent blessings of peace.

Wherever in the writings of the prophets before the exile anything more brilliant than this is promised, a sort of Golden Age of Judaism with a widely extended imperial dominion, it is a forgery of a much later century, which is apparent from the fact that the interpolated passages are Aramaic, while the rest of the books are Hebrew. It is as if we should find passages in modern English in the *Canterbury Tales*. We should say at once: Chaucer did not write this.

It is a misfortune that priests should have pretended to write history or should have had the sole custody of valuable documents, because they are not honest; and yet, their very forgeries become valuable when discovered, because they disclose the purpose of the priests to mislead the present by distorting the past. It was, however, no distant "Messianic Era" of which the prophets dreamed. The promised blessings were to follow immediately upon the reform and were one of the two levers, the other being the predicted "woes," by means of which they hoped to bring it about.

The prophets had been always unpopular and, until the raising of the siege by Sennacherib, which had been foretold by Isaiah, had been little heeded. This remarkable occurrence fed the fires of Jewish fanaticism until men came to believe that Jerusalem, being under the immediate protection of Jahveh, had become impregnable. Jeremiah nearly lost his life, therefore, in the following century by proclaiming its coming destruction.

When, however, his predictions came true and the

Jews were driven into exile in 597 and 586 B.C., men began to say that the prophecies were really the "Word of Jahveh," a term which came to be applied later to all Jewish Scriptures and later still to Christian Scriptures as well, the two collections being known collectively as the "Word of God." The Jews in Babylon began to make collections of prophetic writings and to read them in their assemblies on the Sabbath, together with the provisions of the recently "discovered" law recorded in part of the book of Deuteronomy. The "woes" had certainly come true. People began to look for the promised restoration and, when the victory of Cyrus made a return to Palestine possible, they awaited with confidence the speedy coming of the Golden Age, looking first upon Cyrus and afterwards upon Zerubbabel as the prince who would restore and increase the somewhat mythical glory of the kingdom of David.

The attractive feature of the prophetic program was not carried out and the expected blessings did not materialise; for the company of enthusiasts who returned to the ruins of Jerusalem was doomed to a sad disillusionment, finding, in place of the anticipated wealth, splendour, power, and miraculous fertility, new poverty, hardships, struggles, hostilities, and the heavy hand of the Persian dominion. Two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, encouraged them with the promise that, as soon as the new temple was finished, Jahveh, who was supposed to have withdrawn into the distant North when his temple was destroyed, would return and take up his abode in the new temple, and then all the dreams of the preceding two centuries and more would come true, for the long-anticipated prince, Zerubbabel, was already on the ground.



Continued disappointments dulled the edge of hope, and the Jewish people, forgetting the dreams of their fathers, gradually settled down under the Persian dominion into contentment with their priestly ritual and their ceremonial law, both of them greatly elaborated by Ezra, put forth by him as the "law of Moses" and enforced by Nehemiah, acting under authority of the King of Persia, in the year 444 B.C., nearly a hundred years after the return of their fathers from Babylon.

In all this long period of Jewish history, covering more than three centuries from the time of Amos to that of Nehemiah, there was no thought or suggestion of a Messiah. Only the earlier prophets had assured the people that a descendant of David would overthrow their enemies and re-establish the kingdom as soon as the reforms had taken place, while to Ezekiel it seemed as if Jahveh himself would reign in Jerusalem, the descendant of David being only a sort of executive officer under him. By the beginning of the fourth century B.C. all such expectations had been outgrown and forgotten, and for more than two hundred and fifty years from that time the Jewish people, entirely satisfied with their strange laws, which made them a peculiar people cut off from the rest of the human race, had no political aspirations and had ceased to care who ruled over them, so long as they were unmolested in the enjoyment of their religious peculiarities.

During the comparative quiet of Persian and Egyptian dominion the Jewish religion underwent a great transformation and Judaism was born, one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the religious history of the world, for it is nothing less than the building of a religion upon the basis of race egoism. By means of a

law which kept the Jews almost entirely excluded from contact with the rest of mankind, and by the enforced prohibition of marriage with other people, the priests succeeded in time in building up an almost absolutely pure race, which assumed to be the chosen people and special protégés of God.

They are credited with having developed and with having taught the world monotheism, which is not true. By the road of race conceit they did arrive at monolatry, assuming first that their god was the god of gods because he could apparently control the gods of other nations and, finally, that he was the only god, because they were the only people worth mentioning. Monotheism is the result of Indo-European thinking. The Semitic mind is incapable of it. It can conceive only of will and power and is always materialistic.

The Jews, too, have been credited with spiritual-mindedness, and millions of men have fed their souls with the spirituality of many of the Psalms for more than two thousand years. But did the Jews write them? The population of Judæa before the exile contained a large proportion of Amorite stock, which was an Indo-European stock. This stock was in their blood when they returned and while its influence lasted the most spiritual of the Psalms were written. After it was entirely bred out of them by their new rules of exclusiveness, that is after about 200 B.C., one may look in vain for any spirituality in Jewish literature. There is nothing but materialism.

The new Judaism was aided by two institutions, the temple, with its ancient barbaric cult recently much elaborated, and the synagogue, ever ready to devise new means for tightening the fetters of race exclusiveness.

The dream of a restored Jewish dominion was gone, and men no longer expected a successor of David since the High-Priests had acquired the splendour and trappings of royalty. Even the conflicts which followed the breaking up of Alexander's dominion did not disturb the new spirit of Jewish equanimity, as is evident from the 46th Psalm; and things might have gone on in this manner indefinitely but for a most serious calamity which, in disclosing the intensity of Jewish beliefs, unlocked the flood-gates of fanaticism and delayed for some centuries the religious progress of the world. The more narrow-minded among the Jews had long been alarmed at the growing tendency among the high-priestly and wealthier classes to adopt Greek customs and modes of thought, thus breaking down the strict observance of the law, which had been devised to keep the Jew entirely separated from the rest of the human race, when the overt act of Antiochus Epiphanes produced a terrific explosion of wrath and brought out among the Jews an amazing intensity of fanaticism and unsuspected power of bravery and endurance; for Antiochus attempted nothing less than the entire suppression of the Jewish religion.

Since by the fortune of war Palestine had fallen once more into the hands of the Greek kings of Asia, the High-Priest was obliged to pay a tribute of three hundred talents in place of the twenty formerly paid to the Ptolemies. Onias III, who was High-Priest at the time, had a wicked brother, Jesus by name, who had become entirely Hellenised politically and morally, and had found a Greek form for his name, calling himself Jason.

The latter proposed to Antiochus to add 140 talents to the tribute, if he would depose Onias and make him

High-Priest in his stead, together with an additional 150 talents in return for the privilege of building a gymnasium and circus in Jerusalem, and for granting the citizenship of Antioch to the citizens of Jerusalem. Antiochus naturally fell in with these proposals, both because he needed the money and because he was anxious to establish a greater uniformity of religion and custom throughout his empire.

The deposition of a High-Priest by a foreign ruler was a thing unheard of and caused great scandal and grief among the fanatical adherents of Judaism, and soon ominous threatenings were heard when Jason, to show the extent of his new cosmopolitan sympathies, carried an offering to the temple of the Phœnician Hercules at Tyre. Jason did not long enjoy his ill-gotten wealth and position. He sent a man who had Hellenised his name into Menelaus to carry the tribute to Antiochus at Antioch. Menelaus played the same game which Jason had found profitable and offered an additional 300 talents if Antiochus would make him High-Priest in place of Jason, which was immediately done, to the great increase of Jewish indignation; for, while Jason did belong to the high-priestly family, Menelaus was not even a Levite and could not, according to the law, have filled the lowest menial office in the temple. Menelaus succeeded in driving out Jason and then, notwithstanding extreme methods of extortion, found it impossible to raise the promised tribute of more than a million dollars. It was from this time that publicans and sinners came to be spoken of in the same breath, that a rich man came to be identified with a bad man, and that honest poverty came to be considered the fundamental condition of any possible piety. Menelaus could not pay the tribute and fell into con-

flict with the commander of the fortress. Both were summoned to Antioch. Menelaus left his brother Lysimachus as his representative in Jerusalem, and found a certain Andronicus in charge of the king's affairs, the latter being engaged in a war in Cilicia. He proceeded to bribe Andronicus by the gift of gold vessels which he had stolen from the temple, but the theft was discovered and exposed by Onias III, the deposed High-Priest, then living at Daphne, who learned also that Menelaus had been selling other treasures of the temple in Phœnicia. Andronicus, to save himself from the charge of bribery, beguiled Onias into Antioch and killed him, while Menelaus pacified Antiochus on his return from Cilicia with a new invoice of gold vessels from the temple at Jerusalem.

The accumulated storm of indignation in Jerusalem broke out into riot, and after bitter fighting in the streets Lysimachus lost his life and three thousand of his followers were slain or driven from the city. The people sent three delegates to Antiochus with charges against Menelaus for temple robbery, but it suited Antiochus to sustain Menelaus and he put the delegates to death as the representatives of a revolutionary party. Not long thereafter Antiochus went to war with Egypt, whence a rumour came back that he had been killed. Jason, taking advantage of this, laid siege to Jerusalem in which he found many adherents, but, after some preliminary successes which he abused to take vengeance upon his enemies, he was finally driven off and soon thereafter, still in the year 170 B.C., Antiochus, returning from Egypt, treated Jerusalem as a captured city.

In place of the occasional thefts by Menelaus, he proceeded to the wholesale plundering of the temple.

The golden altar, candlestick, table, with all the vessels and ornaments, were carried away, together with all the gold in the treasury, and on his departure Antiochus left a rough Phrygian by the name of Philip in charge of the city, with Menelaus still as High-Priest, expecting that these two men would soon establish the complete observance of the Greek religion and customs. He did not realise at the time how completely interwoven the Jewish law was with every detail of life, controlling the eating and drinking, cooking and washing, marriage, agriculture, and all occupations. Either his experiences of the law as an obstacle to his plans, or suggestions from Jews who were willing to see their religion abolished, brought about the final blow two years later. Returning from Egypt in the year 168 B.C., smarting under the loss of the fruits of victory at the command of the Roman Senate, Antiochus let loose the full fury of his wrath upon the people of Jerusalem, sending thither at first an army of 22,000 under a tax-collector by the name of Apollonius with orders to the soldiers scattered throughout the city, on the first Sabbath after their arrival, to kill every Jew at sight. There followed a fearful scene of carnage, pillage, and fire. Women, children, and cattle were driven away, walls and houses were overthrown, and the plunder of the city was collected in the fortress of Acra, built higher and stronger than ever. The 74th Psalm describes and laments the wrecking of the temple. Soon thereafter came the decree abolishing the Jewish religion and prohibiting sacrifices, festivals, Sabbath observance, circumcision, the reading or teaching of the law, all under penalty of death, and officials throughout the land were ordered to watch for every act of disobedience. This wide-spread religious persecution

was the more extraordinary because it was entirely contrary to the spirit of Greek civilisation and was without precedent in the annals of Greek political life, whence the suspicion is strong that Antiochus was instigated thereto by renegade Jews, whose past history supplied abundant records of this method of settling religious controversies. In fact, religious murder was commanded in their law (Deut. xvii) and all the persecutions for religion which have darkened the annals of Christendom have found their authority in Jewish law and precedent.

The final blow came on the 25th of December, 168 B.C., when a pagan altar was erected upon the great altar of burnt offering and swine were sacrificed to one of the Greek gods. This was the "Abomination of desolation," afterwards "spoken of by Daniel the Prophet"; and this brings us to a remarkable book which made its appearance within a year or two of this time and which had an astonishing influence upon the life and belief of the Jewish people ever afterwards. Its double purpose was to strengthen their constancy under persecution and to encourage them by pictures of a brilliant future yet in store for them as a nation. The book makes a bid for acceptance by the assumption of a false antiquity, for the author pretends to have lived four hundred and thirty years earlier and to have been carried away to Babylon together with some of his friends in the deportation of the year 597 B.C. In order to encourage his countrymen to hold out against the persecutions under Antiochus, he invents some interesting stories to show how constancy was rewarded in those ancient times, giving as illustrations his own experience in the lion's den and that of his three friends in the fiery furnace. For their further edification and

stimulus he turns prophet and, in pretending to foretell the events of the preceding four centuries, gains credence for his brilliant picture of events which must soon come to pass. His knowledge of history down to the time of Alexander the Great is very dim, but it was not a critical age and there was no one to detect his historical and archæological mistakes. After Alexander's time his knowledge is more accurate, and when he reaches the time of Antiochus IV his statements are those of an eye-witness. He describes a remarkable dream of Nebuchadnezzar which he alone, like Joseph in the ancient legend, was able to interpret. Nebuchadnezzar sees in his dream a wonderful statue with a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, torso of brass, legs of iron, and feet of mingled clay and iron. Daniel is taught the interpretation in a night vision and explains to the King that there are to be four great monarchies in succession, the last one being divided. As this interpretation had come true when the book was written and men could see the fulfilment of the supposed prophecy in the successive empires of the Chaldæans, Medes, Persians, and Greeks, while they themselves were living in the days of the divided Greek empire and had witnessed the unprofitable attempts of the iron and clay to mix in the marriages between the families of the Greek kings and the Ptolemies, the impression among those who read the book must have been profound, awakening in the midst of the immediate agony a new delirium of hope, as men fed their souls upon the picture of the stone which grew into a mountain and which in breaking the feet of the statue brought down into complete and eternal ruin the tyrannies of all the centuries, that God himself might erect a new kingdom which should "consume" and



“break in pieces” and “stand for ever,” thus establishing for his “chosen people” the sovereignty over all the nations of the earth. To make the brilliant prospect of the future still more certain the author relates a dream of his own very like that which he assigns to Nebuchadnezzar. He sees four beasts, a lion with wings, a strange bear, a leopard with wings and four heads, and an indescribable monster. At last the “Ancient of Days” sits in judgment and the beast is slain. Then one “like the Son of Man” comes in the clouds of heaven. “And there is given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away, and his kingdom that which will not be destroyed.” This is explained to the author by “one of them that stood by.” The four beasts represent the four empires, as in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. The “horn” that is to make war against the saints and prevail against them, that is to “speak great words against the Most High and to wear out the saints of the Most High and think to change times and laws,” is no other than Antiochus IV. For men living in the midst of the sufferings of a great persecution, this prophecy was not only a consolation but the source of an enthusiasm which could not stop growing until it reached the white heat of frenzy and fanaticism: “But the judgment will sit and they will take away his dominion to consume and destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the ‘Saints of the Most High,’ whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and all dominions will serve and obey him.”

This is certainly very encouraging, but it is not

modest, and no other people has ever had the conceit and arrogancy to call itself the "Saints of the Most High," nor to imagine itself entitled to universal sovereignty, because it was the special favourite of God.

The older prophets had been content to promise a restoration of the kingdom of David, but this unknown writer of the year 167 B.C., in holding up before the people the picture of a universal Jewish monarchy, was largely responsible for the wars, tumults, fanaticisms, and sufferings of the succeeding two hundred and fifty years, until, after the agony of the Roman siege, the dream was shattered by Titus, and the people were compelled to discover new meanings to prophecies which were not prophetic and to find new interpretations to dreams which could not come true.

In all this interesting portrayal of wonderful events which were soon to happen, the writer makes no mention or suggestion of a Messiah. As he imagines the older empires fitly symbolised by impossible and terrifying monsters which had come up from the abyss, so the new Jewish empire was symbolised by a being like a man, for the expression "Son of Man" means man, and nothing more. It is a symbol and not a person, just as the eagle, the bear, the leopard, and the monster were symbols and not realities. The old empires had been brutal and rooted in hell. The new empire is to be human and humane and to have its origin in heaven. The angel which is represented as explaining the vision to Daniel says distinctly that the dominion is to be given to the "Saints of the Most High," not to a person, and no one ever thought of mistaking the symbolism until the extravagant theories of a later date beguiled the scribes and afterwards the Christians into discovering in the Book of Daniel the prophecy of a Messiah.

It is the province of a sane and sober study of history to correct the blunders of ignorance and folly and to show that until long after this book was written, which was in or very soon after 167 B.C., no one among the Jews had expected any such person as afterwards came to be imagined under the title of Messiah. The older prophets had expected and promised a restoration of the kingdom of David and often under a king descended from David. Four centuries of disappointment, made tolerable by contentment with the new religion of Judaism, had obliterated that ancient hope, and the dream which fired the hearts of men and women under the persecution of Antiochus was of a totally different sort; in place of the little kingdom of David, a world-wide empire; in place of a prince of the house of David, God himself as the supreme ruler enthroned in Jerusalem. There was no room in the scheme of things for a Messiah, for the "Saints of the Most High" were to be the vicegerents of God. On the basis of this new hope the Jewish people dreamed a dream which has never been equalled in the annals of human delusion, a materialistic dream of wealth and power which became the frequent stimulus to hopeless insurrections and in which ideals of righteousness were strangely commingled with the gleam of gold.

The book owed its success in part to the author's attempt to fix the dates when the wonderful things foretold would happen, and especially when relief would come from the agony of persecution.

He explains that when Jeremiah had predicted seventy years as the term of the Jewish sojourn in Babylonia he had really meant seventy weeks of years, or 490 years, from the destruction of Jerusalem to the establishment of the Jewish empire. By some ingenuity and a

disregard of seventy years he estimates that 483 years were to have passed between the deportation to Babylon and the time when an anointed one (a Messiah) should be cut off. The anointed one who was cut off was Onias III, the anointed High-Priest, who was put to death in the year 171 B.C. He still has seven years of the 490 years left and says that "in the midst of the week," that is three and a half years from the death of Onias, the "prince" would cause "the sacrifice and oblation to cease," which manifestly refers to the abolition of the Jewish religion by Antiochus IV in 168 B.C.

According to his theory there are three and a half years left, during which the persecutions will endure, before the final relief and victory. His interpreter of events explains to him: "From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away and the abomination that maketh desolate set up there will be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." To this another seven weeks are added as the time of the final struggle, for he is told: "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."

This positive assurance of relief at a fixed date brought immeasurable consolation to a people in agony, giving them patience to endure and bravery to struggle, while the brilliant picture of coming power and dominion, appealing to the baser passions of the human heart, developed the fighting power of a people accustomed for centuries only to the dull drudgery of religious routine. Nor was this all, for the writer assured the Jewish people that those who lost their lives in a holy war or who fell beneath the axe of the executioner would, after the divine victory, be brought back by God in their original bodies to enjoy the splendour and power of

the Jewish dominion and would receive their full share of the spoil of a conquered world. This is the first Jewish writer who ever taught a belief in a conscious personal existence after the death of the body. Among the Greeks a belief in the immortality of the soul, awakened by philosophy and taught in the Mysteries, had been growing for centuries and had been spread throughout the Orient by the conquests of Alexander, finding, however, no congenial soil in the consciousness of the Jewish people.

The unknown author of the Book of Daniel, passing by this sublime belief, the grandest, next to the belief in God, which ever inspired and comforted the human heart, adopted the Persian belief in a restoration of the physical body, both as more congenial to the materialistic instincts of the Jewish race and as an added stimulus to fanatical endurance amid the distressing exigencies under which he wrote. Instead of the emancipation and freedom of the human soul, with unending vistas of growth towards the things that are true and beautiful and good, it was to be brought back, imprisoned once more within the limitations of the physical frame, subjected again to the sordidness, the sensuousness, the general materialism of physical existence, in order that a fortunate minority of Jews might live in a city built wholly of gold and precious stones (it came to this afterwards in the Book of Tobit) and, in the idle luxury of the vicegerents of God, receive the tribute of a subjugated world.

Such is the origin of the Jewish and Christian belief in the resurrection of the body, a materialistic notion which has delayed the growth of spiritual consciousness for more than twenty centuries. Christian people ought to know whence it came and to recognise it, not

as a revelation from God, but as the debasing of a true spiritual perception to the material instincts of the Semitic race. To the Jew it was welcome and vital because it guaranteed him his share in the coming intoxication of splendour and power. To the average man, who leads only a sensuous life, it is still the only way in which he can apprehend the continuity of personal existence; but, as men grow intelligent and spiritually-minded, the prospect of a new imprisonment in a body limited in all directions will be recognised as an intolerable hindrance to the spirit's growth, and the time will surely come when they will drop the familiar words, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," and will declare, under the inspiration of a true spiritual perception, "I believe in the immortality of the soul."

It was no wonder that among an ignorant, credulous, and suffering people the Book of Daniel found a ready welcome, nor that a host of imitators should follow, vying with one another in the extravagant portrayal of victory and dominion by which a deluded people was stimulated to great deeds of heroism, only to be overwhelmed at last by greater calamities and complete and final ruin.

All of these writers, following so illustrious an example, hid their personalities behind some ancient name whose antiquity and mythical renown seemed to be a guarantee of veracity.

Thus we find, among many others, the works of two supposed Sibyls, the Book and Allegories of Enoch, the Psalter of Solomon, the Book of Jubilees, the Revelation of Baruch, the Revelation of Ezra, the Testament of the Patriarchs and, among books now lost, those which bore the names of Adam and Noah, Jannes and Jambres. It was these books and many

more like them, now lost, which, in the century before and the century after the time of Jesus, guided the thoughts and shaped the beliefs of a multitude among the Jewish people. Ideas, beliefs, and hopes derived from them were dominant among the adherents of Jesus and controlled the interpretation which they gave to his person, his mission, and his work and, bequeathed by them to a world becoming Christian, they have hidden the historic Jesus for nineteen centuries behind a veil of Jewish phantasy and delusion.

Very few read them now. The majority do not even know of their existence, but they become important by reason of their unfortunate consequences and are attractive to those who are interested in the pathology of fanaticism.

Many of them present a philosophy of history unique in its naïveté and conceit of race; for according to it the entire history of the world, so much as the authors knew, is but a series of events prearranged and brought about by God with sole reference to the Jews, the only people in the world for whom he is concerned, in whom he is interested, so that sun and moon and planets exist, empires rise and fall, wars are waged, and people suffer, struggle, and die, in order that eventually the Jews may become the dominant race. With this simple and convenient explanation of history the writers proceeded each in his own way to portray the wealth, splendour, and power of the favourites of God, which awaited only the removal of a few remaining obstacles for their complete realisation. Side by side with the materialistic dreams there went another picture of the righteousness which would be realised in the new life of the Jewish people, for there were among the Jews many holy and humble men of heart to whom purity

and justice were living ideals and who looked forward with the patience of faith and hope to conditions of life under which all men should be just and merciful and true; and yet, when the mental tendencies of races are better understood, it will be recognised that the sweeter ideals and perceptions of a minority among the Jews were due to surviving traces of an ancient Amorite ancestry, which was an Indo-European stock, for these better things were foreign to the Semitic consciousness.

The idea of a Messiah was by no means common to these writers. Most of them, probably the majority, expected God himself to intervene and to destroy the dominion of Rome [for many of them wrote after the sovereignty had passed to Rome] and then either to reign in person in Jerusalem or to entrust the administration of human affairs entirely to the "Saints." Our purpose is to discover such of the books as were responsible for the belief in a Messiah. Prominent among them was the Book of Enoch, a book not only of great influence in shaping Jewish belief, but popular among the Christians for many centuries, disappearing finally in the ninth century to be rediscovered in the eighteenth. It is in two parts, the original work dating from somewhere near the middle of the second century B.C., to which were added the allegories by a later writer. The original book was the work of a sort of Oriental Dante in which the author, assuming to be the mythical Enoch, who tradition said had been taken up alive to heaven, gives a detailed account of his interesting experience. The angels take him upon a journey through the entire universe, explaining to him the origin and operation of everything in the natural world and showing him the place of departed spirits, the joyous abodes of the righteous and the torments of the



damned, finally giving him a commission to return to earth and acquaint the fallen angels with their doom.

During his celestial journey he is shown the tree of life which is reserved for the righteous, together with the tree of knowledge on which grew the apples, the eating of which had caused so much misery on earth. In the allegorical part of the book, of much later date, another writer, who also assumes to be Enoch, sees the vast pageantry of the heavenly court with four of the supposed seven archangels, is given direct information concerning the "Chosen One," the "Son of Man," and is told how he is to judge the world and establish his kingdom. Here the symbolical "Son of Man" of the Book of Daniel, at least a hundred years earlier, becomes a personal Messiah, who is said to have been pre-existent in heaven, to have been created before the sun and the stars, and to have been hidden by God before the creation of the world. This is the source of many beliefs afterwards wrought into a system of Christian theology and transmitted as an essential part of "revealed" religion.

The author shows that before the final peace and joy the people of Palestine will have to suffer from the fearful devastation of a Parthian invasion which, however, will suddenly stop when the wild hordes reach the sacred city of Jerusalem. Then the kingdom will be established. The Messiah will dwell in the midst of his people who will live in familiar intercourse with him and with the angels. The heavens will be transformed and in the new Jerusalem, from which all "sinners" are excluded, the righteous Jews will enjoy an unending life in which goodness, physical comfort, and wealth are strangely blended. It was this fantastic book which more than any others built up among the

Jewish people those extravagant phantasies concerning a Messiah which were current in the time of Jesus.

Another interesting book which appeared in Alexandria about the middle of the second century B.C., claiming the Erythræan Sibyl as its author, shows how the Jewish spirit was modified by the cosmopolitanism of a larger environment, for it predicts a coming confederation of righteous nations, each retaining its independent sovereignty and yet all united under the over-lordship of Jerusalem as the centre and capital of a regenerated world, really a grand idea and the worthiest which issued from the delirium of a people which had lost all intelligent guidance and all rational control. It predicts a Messiah who is to help on the process of the world's transformation, but who disappears before the consummation in order that God may be supreme in the government of the world.

Even before the Book of Daniel was written, the rage of the Jewish people at the profanation of the temple and attempted suppression of their religion had aroused among them an indomitable spirit of heroism and devotion, while the brilliant exploits of the family of the Maccabees, aided by the troubles of Antiochus, had re-established the national life and, under the reign of a royal High-Priest, made it seem as if the wildest dreams of the enthusiasts were on the eve of their fulfilment. Family quarrels, apparently inseparable from any Oriental dominion, together with the intrigues of the Pharisees, then first brought upon the arena of history as the party of a narrow legalism and a bitter orthodoxy, soon shattered the new dream of Jewish dominion and, in bringing the Romans upon the scene in the person of Pompey, opened a new chapter of misery for the Jews and

aroused new writers to tell once more the fascinating story of splendour and dominion which had so often fed the imagination of this much-deluded people. Soon after the taking of Jerusalem by Pompey in the year 63 B.C., appeared a book, known as the Psalter of Solomon, which comforted the people in their new distress. God is king, not the hated Asmonæan dynasty. This was Pharisaic doctrine. God is to have a vicegerent, who will be called David's son, God's Son, and Messiah. The author does not anticipate one individual as the permanent ruler under God, but simply a succession of descendants of David's family, for he says that God has chosen David for king and has sworn to him that through his seed his kingdom will endure forever.

As in this book, so also in the new Sibylline prophecy, which made its appearance in the time of Cleopatra and which expects the destruction of the visible universe as soon as the Romans shall have taken Egypt, it is God's Kingdom which is to emerge from the universal ruin and it is upon God's Kingdom rather than upon the person of a Messiah that all the emphasis is laid.

The same is true of the "Ascension of Moses," which appeared after the death of Herod. It knows nothing of a personal Messiah. In the Book of Jubilees early in the first Christian century it is taught that, while other nations are under the dominion of spirits, God has put no one over Israel, for he alone is its ruler.

The Revelation of Baruch, which made its appearance after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, in the year 70 A.D., and in which the writer pretended to have been the friend and companion of Jeremiah, added

more fuel to the fire of Jewish phantasy, always stimulated to fresh extravagance after each new calamity. In it a Messiah plays the principal rôle, for it is to be his mission to destroy all the people in the world hostile to the Jews, who have escaped the wars, famines, fires, and earthquakes, which God had mercifully provided for their annihilation. Especially will the Messiah destroy the Roman Empire and bring the last emperor in chains to Jerusalem to be put to death.

Then the Messiah is to rule over the righteous and the new Jerusalem descends from heaven. There will be no more sadness, nor envy, nor strife, neither pain, nor weariness, nor hunger. The wild animals will become suddenly tame and the fertility of the soil will be increased ten-thousand-fold, for each grape-vine will have a thousand branches, each branch a thousand bunches, each bunch a thousand grapes, and each grape will yield ninety-five gallons of wine.

About ten years after the appearance of this interesting book there appeared another called "The Revelation of Ezra," which told virtually the same story. According to it the Messiah does not even need to fight, but, standing upon Mt. Zion, he annihilates all the enemies of the Jews with the breath of his mouth, which turns to fire and flame. The Messiah is to reign four hundred years, after which he dies and then, after a general resurrection, God holds a final judgment over all mankind, admitting the righteous to Paradise with access to the tree of life and condemning the "godless" to perpetual hunger and distress.

From this rapid survey of the apocalyptic literature we learn that the belief in a Messiah had absolutely no existence among the Jewish people until within about a century of the birth of Jesus, that it owed its origin

and cultivation entirely to the most absurd and fantastic literature which ever issued from a diseased imagination, and was readily accepted by an ignorant, credulous, and superstitious people because it held out a ray of hope among those who were always suffering from oppression and tyranny and were frequently exposed to persecution and death.

We learn too that there was no general consensus of belief, but only a wild chaos of fantastic expectations, the only agreement being in the anticipation of a kingdom which should destroy and replace the sovereignty of Rome and bring the Jews into power with dominion over all the earth. Some, captivated especially by the books which bore the fictitious names of Enoch, Baruch, and Ezra, expected a personal Messiah as the vicegerent of God, but more thought that God would reign in person in Jerusalem, dividing among "the Saints" the positions of honour and power. Some thought that the new kingdom would be permanent, while others limited its duration and expected at its close a general resurrection of all mankind, a final judgment upon individuals, and then a greater kingdom in heaven when the earth had been destroyed and time should be no more. Many a righteous soul drew consolation from the thought that very soon the horrors of war would cease, that the hated tax-gatherer would no more rob them of the fruits of toil, and that under the reign of justice they would be protected from spoliation by the rich; while others, less attracted by the dream of righteousness, gloated over the prospective debauchery of materialism when they should revel in the spoil of a conquered world; and yet others, fired by fanatical zeal, listened readily to the call of any wild enthusiast who promised to lead them to the overthrow of Rome.

This delirium of a people, which had begun to grow in the century before the birth of Jesus, was exploited, directed, and intensified by the scribes, disseminated by the Pharisees, and often fanned into fury by the Zealots.

The scribes were the chief offenders and were directly responsible for the intoxication of the Jewish people, for they were its accredited teachers surrounded by a halo of infallibility. If they had been sane, intelligent, and honest men they would have denounced the entire mass of apocalyptic literature as a fraud, but, on the contrary, they gave it their sanction, reading, interpreting, and expounding it to the people and putting it virtually on a par with the Law and the Prophets which they had already taught them were infallible.

They went still farther, for, having taken up the idea of a Messiah as set forth in part of this strange literature, they taught that the belief concerning him was identical with the expectations of the ancient prophets concerning a descendant of David who would restore the kingdom of David to its former and largely imaginary splendour and power.

On the basis of this assumption they set to work to discover in their Scriptures prophecies of a Messiah as described in part of the new literature of delusion. By taking single passages away from their context, by ignoring history altogether, and by much violent ingenuity of misinterpretation they succeeded in finding abundant prophecies of a Messiah where they did not exist. The early Christians, trained from childhood in this school of dogmatic iniquity and believing as they did that Jesus was the Messiah, surpassed the scribes in the insanity of their exegesis and used their misin-

terpretations of Jewish Scripture as materials for telling and afterwards for writing the story of Jesus. Thus it has come about that the whole Christian world for nearly nineteen centuries has been misled by the scribes, who were the enemies of Jesus.

It is time that this iniquity stopped and that intelligent people throughout the Christian world learned that the idea of a Messiah had its origin only in the fantastic dream of a few irresponsible fanatics, that there never could be a corresponding reality and consequently that Jesus was not a Messiah.

It becomes necessary, therefore, in studying the Synoptic Gospels, to eliminate from them the very theory in support of which they were written, and to discover, as far as possible, back of their misinterpretation of his person, such actual facts concerning himself, his purpose, and his method as belong to a sane and sober reconstruction of history.

We have learned already that, while all the writers of apocalyptic literature portrayed the splendours of the coming kingdom, a personal Messiah was not an essential part of the general dream, and we need to realise that for this reason opinions were divided at the time of Jesus, some expecting a Messiah as an all-conquering King and others looking for the direct intervention of God in human affairs. We shall learn from our study of the Gospels that it was this latter belief which filled the soul of Jesus with enthusiasm, courage, and hope.

It was the coming of God and the establishment of God's Kingdom which he preached. A Messiah as the representative and agent of God had no place in his thoughts, except as a possibility of secondary value, while his overwhelming interest in the Kingdom of God

precluded the possibility of his identifying himself with the Messiah of the popular consciousness.

In view of these facts it is idle, as so many even scholarly writers have done, to attempt to determine the exact degree of "Messianic consciousness" in the mind of Jesus, to fix the time when he first knew himself to be the Messiah, or to try to show by laboured arguments that he proposed to be a different kind of Messiah from the one expected by the people. If it is possible to dismiss all prejudices in our study of the Gospels we shall find that the prospect of the coming of the Kingdom of God was too absorbing, and that Jesus was cast in too grand a mould to allow him to think of himself as a Messiah, or even to think of himself at all.

Dismissing from our minds the worst of the delusions, which have hidden away the reality of Jesus, we shall fall the more readily among those who have "ears to hear" and, catching his enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God, entering into his sympathy with humanity in distress, and sharing his hope of the latent possibilities of manhood, we shall begin to lay hold of his faith in God, to develop his love for man, and so, really believing his Gospel, we shall expect, not soon, nor suddenly, but none the less certainly and as the final term in the great evolution of humanity, an ideal civilisation under which men will be free from ignorance, poverty, disease, and crime and, under the impetus of a sublime enthusiasm, shall enrol ourselves as fellow workers in helping God to develop civilisation and so to save the world.

#### LEGENDS OF THE BIRTH

*Luke i, ii; Matthew i, ii*

Jesus was born at Nazareth, a small village on the western side of the Lake of Galilee.



This much we know from an account in the original Gospel of a visit which he made there at some time after the beginning of his public work. (Mark vi, 1.) "And he cometh into his own country." The people, astonished at his teaching, asked, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?" to which he replied, "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."

He was also commonly known as Jesus of Nazareth, as is shown three times by Mark and six times by Luke, thus indicating, according to the custom of his age and country, that Nazareth was the place of his birth and not simply that of his abode.

Yet, notwithstanding this simple and evident fact, the belief became established towards the close of the first century, about a generation after Mark wrote his Gospel, that he was born in Bethlehem.

This strange perversion of an historical fact was due to the belief of the Jewish Christians that he was the Messiah, and all their efforts from the earliest days were directed to the winning of converts to this belief. They soon found it necessary to meet two requirements among the popular notions concerning a Messiah, by showing that Jesus was really a descendant of David and that he was born in Bethlehem. At first, however, they were content with quite a different explanation as to how he came to be a Messiah, saying that God had anointed him with the Holy Ghost at the time of his baptism. This was the popular explanation when Mark wrote his Gospel, about 67 A.D. Between this date and the end of the century the Christians found it necessary to supplement this explanation by such a

showing as to descent and place of birth as would satisfy the demands of a greater number of the Jewish people.

For this purpose they began to construct genealogical lists. Two of them have come down to us in the Gospels which bear the names of Luke and Matthew. The two lists do not agree, even as to the father of Joseph, and yet they must have been well received by many of the Jewish people, for the authors of these Gospels did not venture to omit them, even though a later theory as to the descent of Jesus had made them irrelevant and absurd. Matthew, who seems to have been much impressed with the Babylonian theory of numbers, imagined that history was dominated by it and that there must have been three sets of fourteen generations each from Abraham to Jesus; but, in order to make his theory fit the facts, he found it necessary, in his second group, to omit four kings. Notwithstanding the ingenuity that was exercised in constructing these lists, we are surprised upon examining them to find that they do not show a descent of Jesus from David after all, since Luke says that Joseph was only "supposed" to be his father, and Matthew says distinctly that he was born before the marriage, while his mother was simply betrothed to Joseph.

This is most extraordinary, since it virtually sets aside one of the beliefs dearest of all to the Jewish heart, and does it in favour of a totally new belief in harmony with pagan ideas according to which Jesus is no longer a Jewish Messiah and no longer a claimant to Jewish sovereignty by descent from David, but has become, in accordance with many pagan analogies, a real Son of God by a human mother. The universality of the belief in a Son of God born of a virgin is one of the most

extraordinary phenomena of history. We find it in China more than five thousand years ago, where the story is told of the Emperor Fo-Hi. More familiar are the narratives in India, where vast populations have believed for more than twenty-five centuries that Krishna, Buddha, and Salivahana were Sons of God by virgin mothers. In Egypt it was Horus and Ra and a long line of kings; in Persia, Zoroaster. Among the Greeks and Romans it was taught that Hercules was the son of Jupiter and Alcmene, Bacchus of Jupiter and Semele, Perseus of Jupiter and Danaë, Mercury of Jupiter and Maia, Apollo of Jupiter and Latona; while in more recent times, Alexander the Great was doubly honoured, being known at home as the son of Jupiter and Olympias and, after the conquest of Egypt, signing himself, in obedience to an "Oracle," Alexander, son of Jupiter Ammon. Plato, born at Athens in the year 429 B.C., was believed by his pupils to have been the son of Apollo and Perictione, and it was related by them that Ariston, to whom his mother was betrothed, was warned by Apollo in a dream that he was the father of the expected child.

Such being the universal belief of the pagan world, it was impossible that pagans should construe the expression "Son of God" in any but the familiar way. One would think that, when this new belief found expression in a written Gospel, the author would have omitted the genealogical lists as irrelevant and of no further use, but they were already too strongly rooted in the hearts of the Jewish Christians to be suppressed.

Luke's Gospel did not originally contain the new theory, but a rather unsuccessful attempt was made by some later editor to make it conform to it. In chapter iii, verse 23, the words "as was supposed" were

inserted, making the passage read "Jesus being the son, 'as was supposed,' of Joseph." Luke was certainly too able and intelligent a writer to have copied a genealogical list and to have prefaced it by saying that it was really of no value, because his hero was not the son of his father after all. On the contrary, he took the genealogy seriously, because he considered the supposed descent from David a matter of importance. These words were therefore a later interpolation, as were also the 34th and 35th verses of the first chapter, as we shall see later. Omitting these passages, there is nothing relating to a belief in a supernatural birth of Jesus in Luke's Gospel. This belief was entirely a matter of the second century and was first recorded in Matthew's Gospel amended and re-edited about the year 120 A.D. But, as we have seen, there was probably an earlier edition of Matthew's Gospel, dating from about the year 75 A.D., which did not contain this new belief. In chapter i, verse 16, we read, "and Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." Certain manuscripts, however, record what was apparently an earlier reading: "Joseph, to whom the Virgin Mary was betrothed, begat Jesus Christ." It is evident that the new theory had a long struggle to gain acceptance, and that it could not suppress the older Jewish Christian beliefs is shown by the effort which both Luke and Matthew make to prove that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which would have been a matter of no importance except in connection with the supposed descent from David.

Matthew shows, ii, 6, the origin of the popular delusion that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. A passage in the Book of the Prophet Micah, v, 2,

seemed to give definite information upon the subject. There they read, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee will he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." If they had read a little farther in the same chapter, they would have found the words, "And this man will be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into the land." In other words, the prophet promised a deliverer from the threatened invasion of the Assyrians. He was not thinking of a Messiah seven hundred years after his time; but, after the Messianic idea had taken hold of the Jewish imagination, the pernicious habit had grown up of taking isolated passages of the older Scriptures away from their context and reading into them fictitious interpretations. This passage, flagrantly misinterpreted, sufficed to establish the general belief that the Messiah must be born in Bethlehem. The Christians found it necessary, therefore, in support of their claim that Jesus was the Messiah, to show that he was born in Bethlehem, which was not at first an easy thing to do, because all Jewish Christians of the first and most of those of the second generation knew perfectly well that he was born at Nazareth. Time, however, gradually effaced the memory of facts, and Luke, writing about the close of the century, thought that he had discovered a very happy explanation to account for the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, although the home of his parents was Nazareth. He says that it was due to the taking of the census under Quirinus. In the second chapter we read: "There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. . . . And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth,

into Judæa, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child. And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born son." This seems quite plausible, so long as one is ignorant of history and unacquainted with Roman administrative methods, but, when examined by the light of facts, it is found to be a tissue of inaccuracies. Luke does not say that Herod was alive when Jesus was born, while Matthew distinctly says that he was alive at the time.

Herod died in the year 4 B.C., after which Archelaus was king until 6 A.D., when he was deposed, and Judæa and Samaria made subordinate to the province of Syria. It was then that a census was taken under Quirinus, so there is a discrepancy of ten years in the dates, while Luke makes it quite impossible that Jesus should have been born at the time of the census, since he says, *iii*, 23, that he was "about thirty years of age" when he began to teach, which was after the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar; whereas, had he been born at the time of the census, he could not have been more than twenty-two at that time. The census-taking could therefore not account for the presence of Joseph and Mary at Bethlehem. But, even if Luke had been right as to the date and the census had occurred ten years earlier than it did, there was nothing in the taking of a census in Judæa to make the supposed journey of Joseph necessary. Judæa and Samaria were annexed to the province of Syria, but not Galilee, which was still a semi-independent tetrarchy, and there was no decree "that all the world should be taxed,"

but only that the census should be taken in the newly annexed countries. And if, furthermore, the census had affected Galilee, the Roman Government enrolled people where they lived, not where their ancestors might be supposed to have lived a thousand years before. Such an undertaking would have been the source of hopeless confusion. Even if Galilee had been annexed to Syria, there would have been no reason on account of a census for Joseph's taking a journey to Bethlehem, and, had such a thing been possible, there was not the slightest shadow of a reason why he should take his wife, or the maid to whom he was betrothed, since the Roman Government taxed men, not women, while to require a woman to take the long and tedious journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in Mary's reported condition would have been both cruel and dangerous.

Thus Luke's story of the census to account for the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem breaks down entirely. Matthew tells a totally different story. By the time of the final editing of his Gospel the facts had been entirely obliterated, so that, instead of attempting to explain how Joseph and Mary happened to be at Bethlehem, he undertakes to show how they happened to remove to Nazareth. It had come to be taken as a matter of course that Joseph and Mary had always lived at Bethlehem and that, naturally, Jesus was born there. According to the legends which he gives, however, it became dangerous soon after the birth to remain there, because Herod had proposed to kill all the children of a certain age. To escape the threatened danger, an angel directed Joseph to take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt, while, on his return, being afraid of Archelaus, he was directed in a dream to go to Nazareth. But of this later. It is entirely

opposed to Luke's account, which knows of no hostility of Herod, nor of any flight into Egypt, but has the child "presented" in the temple, which was not a Jewish custom, after which his parents "returned into Galilee to their own city Nazareth."

#### THE LEGENDS IN LUKE'S GOSPEL

To the literary and poetic genius of Luke, on the basis of popular legends, are due the contents of the two chapters which have charmed the Christian world for eighteen centuries. The multitude, which is not made up of poets, has always taken these matters seriously, finding in them evidence in favour of some astonishing dogmas and often imagining them of more importance than the spiritual teaching of Jesus; but, to-day, in recognising their legendary origin and poetic drapery, we not only do no violence either to religion, or to Scripture, but assist in removing an obstacle to religion by serving the cause of truth. The legends of John the Baptist were made the pedestal on which to rear the stupendous superstructure of the legends of the birth of Jesus. Apart from the imagination of Luke there is not the slightest ground for supposing that Jesus was in any way related to John. The latter belonged to a Judæan family, possibly of the priestly caste, while Jesus was of a peasant family in Galilee. John the Baptist is said to have begun his prenatal career by being a miraculous child, the material for the story being abundantly supplied in the ancient legends of Isaac, Samson, and Samuel. Gen. xviii, 11; xvi, 11, 17, 19. Judges xiii, 4, 7, 14.

The Pharisees and the common people under their control had long since adopted the Persian beliefs con-



cerning angels and imagined them to be supernatural agents in immediate contact with men, leaving God in isolated majesty in the distant heavens. It would seem to them, therefore, a perfectly natural thing that Gabriel, or some other angel, should bring a message from God. Christendom has removed God still farther from men by introducing the Saints as an additional order of intermediaries. In these legends it was Gabriel who announced the birth of John and afterwards of Jesus. Concerning the latter we read, i, 26 ff.: "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came in unto her and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee. But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give unto him the throne of his father David; and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end . . . and behold, Elizabeth thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren. For no word from God will be void of power."

It is evident that verses 34 and 35, which have been omitted in the quotation, break the connection, which makes it look very probable that they are a later interpolation. We have already seen that the words "as was supposed" which rendered the genealogical list

useless and absurd were inserted in the interest of the later theory of a miraculous birth. In the second chapter, in the 27th verse, Luke speaks of "the parents," in the 33d of "his father and his mother," in the 41st of "his parents," and in the 48th it is "Thy father and I." He also calls Jesus, iv, 22, "Joseph's son." Certainly when he wrote this he had no idea of a miraculous or supernatural birth, and it is reasonable to suppose that he wrote the first chapter at the same time and while holding the same belief. We must conclude, therefore, that these two verses, 34 and 35, were interpolated at the same time as the words "as was supposed." Omitting these passages, there is nothing in Luke's Gospel to suggest a miraculous birth of Jesus. Even the supposed message of Gabriel contains nothing of the sort. He is represented as communicating to a girl about to be married the information that she is to have a wonderful son who is to receive the throne of David and to reign over the house of Jacob for ever. This imaginary programme was not carried out, but, at the time when this was written, the Christians believed that Jesus would soon return from his temporary retirement to heaven to reign in person over the restored kingdom of David.

There is not the slightest hint in this communication that the son is to be born before Mary is married, therefore the interpolation is very clumsily done. She is not surprised nor impressed by the promised greatness and brilliant prospects of the son, but is represented as breaking in suddenly with the wholly irrelevant and unprovoked question as to how she is to have a son, since she knows not a man, whereupon the angel interrupts his message long enough to explain to her, "The Holy Ghost will come upon thee and the power of the

Most High will overshadow thee; wherefore also that which is to be born will be called Holy, the Son of God." This brought the Gospel into harmony with pagan ideas concerning a Son of God and we may confidently strike out these two verses as not belonging originally to the Gospel of Luke. The material for the supposed message of Gabriel was found in 2 Sam. vii, 13, and Is. ix, 6.

The story of the visit of Mary to Elizabeth is intended to show the subordinate position of John with respect to Jesus and illustrates the belief of the Jewish Christians towards the close of the first century.

The song which Luke assigns to Mary is a free paraphrase of the anciently reported song of Hannah at the prospect of the birth of Samuel. 1 Sam. ii. It expresses the beliefs and feelings of a large party among the Jewish Christians to whom Jesus seemed to be a Saviour of the poor and needy from misery and oppression. The psalm assigned to Zechariah illustrates the hope of multitudes among the pious common folk, suffering from oppression, that, being delivered from their enemies, they might worship God according to the traditions of the Jewish people.

Coming to the birth of Jesus, Luke draws an impressive contrast between the greatness of his mission and destiny and the humble conditions of his entrance into the world. His father and mother, arriving at Bethlehem, found the khan full of people and every place occupied, so that when the child was born there was nothing to do but to lay him in a manger. The picture has always appealed to the imagination and has been abundantly illustrated in art, and yet the story has nothing to do with the teaching and influence of Jesus, nor will these things, which are the only matters of importance, suffer any diminution of power, but will

the rather gain, when a more intelligent Christian world learns that Jesus was not born in Bethlehem after all.

Luke heightens the contrast by another beautiful picture of the angel, the shepherds, and the heavenly host.

Whereas the Saviour of the world is born without the cognisance of mankind, there is great joy in the heavenly world and, while none of the great ones of the world are told of the event, an angel brings word to shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night, telling them, "there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ, the Lord." The account goes on to say, "and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good-will to men" (or peace to men of good-will). This is a work of the highest poetic genius and one wonders what were the underlying suggestions in the mind of Luke. The sixtieth chapter of the Book of Isaiah, the second Isaiah, that enthusiastic prophet in Babylon just before the return from exile, certainly supplied part of the thought in his description of the glory of Jerusalem as the capital of a tributary world. This chapter is now recognised as a much later forgery. It has been suggested, however, by Soltau, that many inscriptions recently discovered in various parts of Asia Minor were suggestive of some of the thoughts contained in this remarkable story. These inscriptions are on tablets making an official appointment of September twenty-third, the birthday of Augustus, as a day to be observed throughout the empire. Two samples may suffice to show the nature of all.

"Since the Providence, which controls everything in

our life, has reawakened emulation and effort and given our life its noblest ornament in sending us Augustus, whom for the well-being of mankind it filled with virtue and sent him to us and our posterity as a Saviour, who should make war to cease and establish order, and, since Cæsar by his appearing has fulfilled the hopes which had been built upon him, in that he not only surpassed all previous benefactors, but left no hope to future generations of surpassing him, but the birthday of this god has become the beginning of the Gospel concerning him for the world, therefore . . .”

Another inscription, at Halicarnassus, speaks of Augustus as “the Saviour of the whole human race, in care for which Providence has not only answered but surpassed the prayers of all, since peace reigns on earth,” etc.

These tablets were erected during the years between 2 B. C. and 14 A. D., and if Luke had not actually seen any of them, the reasons which they give for celebrating the birthday of Augustus represent, nevertheless, the consensus of feeling throughout the empire at the time when he wrote. With the advent of Augustus the long period of devastating wars had ceased, a new era of good-will among men had dawned. He was commonly spoken of as the Saviour of the world, while it was reported and believed that he was the son of a god, his mother having conceived him directly from Apollo, who visited her in the form of a serpent while asleep at night in his temple. The universality of such beliefs was afterwards used as an argument by Origen for persuading people to accept the account of the miraculous birth of Jesus.

It is to be noted that the statement in the interpolated verses, 34 and 35 of chapter i, never could have origi-

nated in Palestine, for no one accustomed to speak Aramaic, or brought up in the atmosphere of Hebrew thought, could have written, "The Holy Ghost will come upon thee and the power of the Highest will overshadow thee," since ghost or spirit in Hebrew is feminine, and never could have been thought of as the father of Jesus. The Gospel of the Hebrews speaks of the Holy Ghost as his mother. This idea, therefore, of the Holy Ghost as the father of Jesus is purely of pagan origin. Although the Holy Ghost is of the neuter gender in Greek, indicating an influence and not a person, it is identified in this passage with the "Power of the Highest," which is masculine.

Luke relates further that the shepherds went in haste to Bethlehem in search of the child and, having found him, told his astonished parents of their remarkable experience. Then, in due course of time, the child was presented in the temple at Jerusalem, where Simeon and Anna prophesy wonderful things. These are popular legends, which had circulated for centuries among the people of Western Asia and were rescued and put into poetic form by the genius of Luke. They are identical, almost word for word with the stories, which had been current for six hundred years concerning the birth of Buddha and, although no one has been bold enough to say that the Christians unconsciously absorbed the Buddhist legends and applied them to Jesus, yet the astonishing similarity of the two is one of the incontrovertible facts of history. There was no Jewish law requiring the "presentation" of children in the temple. It was the custom in India, not in Judæa. Originally the first-born son was sacrificed to Jahveh and there were frequent reversions to the ancient custom down to the time of the exile. After the return, the new law of

Ezra recognised the lamb or pigeons, which a woman offered after childbirth, as substitutes for the sacrifice of the child, but there was not the slightest suggestion of "presenting" the child. Either Luke did not know what the Jewish custom was, or he strained a point to bring in a story of the "presentation," which certainly makes it look probable that the whole story is but the echo of the older story of the presentation of Buddha in the temple of the gods, when the statues even of Indra and Brahma left their pedestals to greet in all humility the god of gods.

While the aged Asita, a monk from the Himalayas, weeps because he will not live to see the results of Buddha's work, the aged Simeon, in the Christian legend, weeps for joy, because his eyes have seen the Salvation.

In summing up the study of these two chapters of the Gospel of Luke, we find that their contents are entirely contrary to the teaching of the earlier Gospel, as represented by the Gospel of Mark, and contrary to the entire Gospel of Luke outside these two chapters, that they were unknown to the first two generations of Christians, and that the idea of a supernatural birth is entirely of pagan origin. We find that Jesus was born at Nazareth and that the story of a birth at Bethlehem was the result of a Jewish delusion. We find, also, from the teaching of Jesus, that the fatherhood of God is a fact to be realised in the spiritual consciousness and that a Son of God by physical generation is entirely destructive of his teaching. We find, as the highest outcome of Christian belief, that "God is a spirit" and that "those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth," and that we cannot even approach this faith while holding fast to pagan ideas. We find

that, to be true to the teaching of Jesus and to profit by it, these chapters must be excluded from any record of his life and teaching which makes any pretence to truth.

#### THE LEGENDS IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

We turn to Matthew's Gospel. We have seen that there must have been an earlier edition, dating probably from about the year 75 A.D., in which Joseph was recognised as the father, i, 16, for without that the genealogical table was an absurdity. The new theory could not suppress the supposed genealogy, which was very dear to the Jewish heart. After the establishment of the new belief, the Christians, with charming naïveté, undertook to hold both beliefs at the same time, that Joseph was the father of Jesus and yet he was not, because God was.

At the time when the present Gospel of Matthew was written, not much, if any, before 120 A.D., the miraculous birth had come to be taken as a matter of course. Mary was "found with child of the Holy Ghost." Joseph was much distressed at the discovery, but an angel informed him in a dream that the Holy Ghost was the father of the child, notwithstanding the fact that the Holy Ghost was feminine in the language which Joseph spoke. The author explains that the birth of a son of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary was in fulfilment of a prophecy, which said, "Behold the virgin will be with child, and will bring forth a son." The prophecy referred to is in the 7th chapter of the Book of Isaiah, at the 14th verse. If any one will take the trouble to read the chapter, he will find that Isaiah feels impelled to go to Ahaz with what he believes to



be a message from Jahveh. He tells him not to fear Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Samaria, because both Damascus and Samaria are to be destroyed and that Jahveh will give him a sign that this is a true prophecy. Ahaz declines to doubt the word, but Isaiah declares that Jahveh will give him a sign, nevertheless. A young woman will conceive and have a son and will call his name Immanuel and, before the son is old enough to know the difference between good and evil, Damascus and Samaria will be forsaken by both of their kings. The prophecy was therefore to be fulfilled within five or six years, and nothing but the most extreme insanity of dogmatism could imagine it to refer to the birth of a child seven and a half centuries later.

The absurd use of it by the Christians in the early part of the second century was due to the fact that none of them knew Hebrew, but that such as could read, and especially the multitude of Jews living in Greek-speaking lands, were dependent upon the Greek translation of the Scriptures, known as the Septuagint. The Hebrew word *almah*, which Isaiah used, signifies a young woman, without reference to whether she is married or not. The sign which Isaiah proposed to Ahaz in attestation of his prophecy was not that a girl would become the mother of a fatherless child, but that, before a child soon to be born was old enough to know right from wrong, the enemies which threatened Judah would be overthrown.

When, however, the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, the translators found no single Greek word, as there is none in English, corresponding to the Hebrew *almah*. If they had been careful scholars, they would have translated it "a young woman," but they were not so careful and they unfortunately used

the word *parthenos*, which means "virgin." Had Isaiah meant virgin, he would have written *bethulah*, not *almah*. This blunder in translating has been the source of vast mischief; for, when the belief in a miraculous birth had become established, the Christians eagerly fell upon this passage in the Greek translation and, wresting it from its context, imagined that the supernatural birth of Jesus had been a matter of prophecy seven hundred and fifty years before.

The author takes it for granted that Jesus must have been born in Bethlehem, on account of a passage in the Book of Micah, v, 2, which says that the deliverer from the Assyrians would come from the old Bethlehemite stock. He knows nothing of the shepherds, the glory, the heavenly host, as related by Luke, and yet builds upon part of the same 60th chapter of the Book of Isaiah, which had supplied so much material to Luke. It is, however, not the heavenly joy which impresses him, but the picture of the tributary world, when the gates of Jerusalem will be open day and night to enable the kings of all nations to come with tribute and adoration to Zion. In connection with this fantastic picture, there was a wide-spread popular belief that the birth of the Messiah would be made known by the appearance of a new star, a belief which may have grown from the ancient tradition of Balaam's prophecy of a "star out of Jacob," yet the notion was prevalent everywhere that the birth of great men was heralded by signs in the heavens. In fact, astrology was taken seriously everywhere, a fact due to the far-reaching influence of Babylon. At that time its greatest adepts were the Magi, the priests and worshippers of Ormuzd in Persia. Two sets of ideas were working together in the popular mind among the Christians, the thought of kings bring-

ing presents, and the thought of Persian astrologers discovering a star, which they interpreted to indicate a remarkable birth in Judæa. Out of the fusion of these two ideas grew the gifts and the Magi. It seems quite unnecessary that the Magi, who were supposed to have come all the way from Persia under the guidance of a star, should have had to inquire of Herod where the remarkable child was likely to be found, because, immediately thereafter, the star resumed its journey, led them to Bethlehem, and finally "stood over where the young child was." Herod, however, is introduced for the sake of bringing in a new version of a very ancient myth, one of the oldest in all mythology, which told of the danger which threatened the life of the new god, the new-born sun, on the 25th of December, from the dragon, the leviathan, the old serpent, which had held the world enslaved during the preceding months of cold and darkness. The myth is given at length in the Book of Revelation, chapter xii. "And a great sign was seen in heaven; a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." Art has long since made us familiar with the picture of the Madonna standing on the moon, while not long since the whole Catholic world contributed to the purchase of a halo of twelve stars in diamonds for a statue of the Madonna in St. Peter's in Rome. "And she was with child: and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered, and there was seen another sign in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems, and his tail draweth the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman, which was about to be deliv-

ered, that, when she was delivered, he might devour her child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

This is the old, old story of the conflict of Summer and Winter, Light and Darkness. Among many nations, through thousands of years, with slight changes of form, the same story has been told. A wonderful child, destined to great deeds, threatened to dethrone the reigning king. The latter was waiting to kill him at birth, but he, being rescued, grew up to do great things for the human race. Among the Babylonians the struggle between Marduk and Tiamat had been told for at least four thousand years, as had also been related in Egypt the watchfulness of Typhon to destroy the infant Horus at birth. The legend was not carried so far in the case of Buddha, since Bimbisara, the King of Magadha, rejected the advice to kill the child, yet many centuries earlier the whole myth had been related of Krishna. The reigning King, Khansa, instructed his messengers "to kill all the infants in the neighbouring places," while in the cave temple at Elephanta a great relief represents a man holding a drawn sword surrounded by slaughtered infant boys.

The same story is included in the myth of Abraham, whose life was said to have been in danger from Nimrod, who, to save his life from the expected "dangerous child," had ordered that all women with child should be guarded with great care and that all children born of them should be put to death. Among the Greeks it was Perseus, Hercules, Æsculapius, Bacchus, and

others, who were rescued from the danger which threatened their birth. Coming down to historic times, we are more familiar with the stories of the preservation and rescue of Sargon I, Moses, Cyrus, and Romulus and Remus. It is evident, therefore, that, in the Christianised form of the most ancient myth in the world, Herod is made to do duty for the old dragon, who would destroy the new-born son, the Lord and Giver of life, while the rescue of "the dangerous child" is said to have been made possible by a flight into Egypt, suggested to Joseph by an angel. The Jewish Christians thought that they had good authority for a sojourn in Egypt, because they found a passage in the Book of Hosea, which said: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt." Omitting the first part of the passage, the second became at once "Messianic" and referred to Jesus. It was, therefore, perfectly clear to them that Jesus must have been in Egypt, but dulness did not perish from the earth in early Christian days, for hundreds of Christians still go to see the tree at Matariyeh, a few miles from Cairo, under which the Holy Family "rested" on the occasion of their "flight into Egypt." Coins have been found in Asia Minor representing the flight of Leto, the mother of Apollo, from the dragon Python, who threatened the young god's life. In the Christian form of the legend Herod was made to do duty for the dragon, but his supposed slaughter of the innocents was unknown to any sober historian and was never suggested by any one but the author of the first Gospel.

The quotation from the Book of Jeremiah is as unfortunate as most of the misinterpreted and misapplied passages of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Matthew states that an angel informed Joseph in

Egypt of the death of Herod and told him to return to the land of Israel, but that he was afraid to do so when he heard that Archelaus was king. God, however, directed him in a dream to go to Galilee and he finally settled at Nazareth, in order, as Matthew says, to fulfil a prophecy, "He shall be called a Nazarene." There was no such prophecy. There was a story in the Book of Judges, ch. xiii, that Samson's mother was informed by an angel that she would have a son and that he would be a Nazarite. What a Nazarite is is explained in the sixth chapter of the Book of Numbers, a man who turns monk for a while and makes a vow not to drink wine or vinegar, or to eat grapes, fresh or dried, or grape-skins or kernels, nor to cut his hair, nor to attend the funeral of any of his relations. It was a piece of hopeless stupidity which led some of the Christians to imagine that because Nazarite and Nazarene were alike in the first syllable, therefore this supposed prophecy about Samson really referred to the Messiah and disclosed the divine intention of having Jesus live for a while in Nazareth.

This completes the study of the legends of the birth of Jesus. It has been a misfortune of incalculable magnitude that they were ever incorporated in any of the Gospels, for they have hidden away the real Jesus behind a veil of the fantastic and the supernatural, borrowed from the superstitions of paganism and, rousing churches and nations to the defence of absurd and impossible dogmas, have prevented millions of people from appreciating the magnificent personality of Jesus, from emulating his courage, sharing his hatred of unreality in religion, acquiring his standards, and growing into his faith.

It will inaugurate a great age for religion and the

world, if Christendom shall ever be able to cast off its burden of Jewish delusion and pagan folly and learn to believe and hope and love in the spirit and with the enthusiasm of Jesus, no longer reading these chapters in the churches, nor teaching their contents to children, as if they were matters of history, but resting content with the facts as known to the early Christians, that Jesus was born at Nazareth and that his parents were Joseph and Mary; for, when no longer obscured by the glamour of the supernatural, his wonderful spiritual consciousness will become a grander power than ever for the religious development of the world.

#### THE DESCENT OF JESUS

Were the parents of Jesus Jews? It is commonly so stated and believed and yet when we consider the facts it seems very improbable.

It is necessary to distinguish between adherents of the Jewish religion and members of the Jewish race, artificially bred by priests in and about Jerusalem after the middle of the fifth century before the Christian era, by enforcing the prohibition against marriage with the members of any other race.

The Hebrews, who had wandered as nomad shepherds into Palestine more than a thousand years before and had eventually conquered it, seem to have been already a mixed race, resulting from a fusion of Arab and Syrian stock in Padan Aram, west of Mesopotamia, where they had lived for an unknown number of centuries.

Coming into Palestine, they intermarried freely with the inhabitants whom they found there, chiefly Hittites and Amorites, the latter an Indo-European stock,

adopting their civilisation, customs, religion, and festivals and only very slowly substituting the worship of Jahveh, under the active propaganda of the prophets, for that of the original and local Baals. The result of this fusion, going on for centuries, was the Israelites, a race of very mixed origin, which owed its ability in war and civil government, not to the Hebrew and earlier Bedouin stock, but to the Hittite and Amorite stock, which was largely in the preponderance, and it would be very interesting to know whether the great prophets of Israel did not owe their intelligence and their instinctive protest against Semitic ideas in the worship of God to their foreign blood, especially Amorite blood.

In the year 721 B.C. about eighty per cent. of the population of the Northern Kingdom was driven into captivity by the Assyrians and never heard of again. In course of time the land was recolonised by people drawn from various parts of the Assyrian Empire, but there was no new infusion of Hebrew stock. The people were so entirely un-Israelitish and un-Hebrew that Galilee, at least, came to be known as Galilee of the Gentiles.

After the destruction of the Northern Kingdom, the priests in the little Kingdom of Judah conceived the extraordinary idea of making an artificial race entirely subservient to them, by breeding out all the elements of foreign stock which tended to enlarge the view of life and to bring the people into sympathy with the civilisation and progress of the world.

During the first hundred years they had very little success, but a hundred years after the return from Babylon, Ezra with the help of Nehemiah was able to enforce the prohibition against mixed marriages and



from that time on the priests were able to raise—Jews.

Now it so happened that the mixed population in the North, while in no way related to the Jewish race, was nevertheless devoted to the Jewish religion, and this had come about in a very curious and interesting manner.

After the Assyrians had carried away the population and before the new inhabitants arrived, the wild animals had increased very rapidly and the newcomers found themselves in constant danger from lions. They had brought their gods with them, Succoth-benoth, Nergal, Ashima, Nibhaz, Tartak, and Adrammelech (2 Ki. xvii), but these were foreign gods and had each his own territory. It was necessary to placate the god of the land, but they did not know how.

They therefore sent a petition to the King of Assyria to let them have one of the captive priests, and he accordingly sent them a priest of Jahveh, that he might persuade Jahveh to restrain the lions. From this beginning the people of the North acquired in time the Jewish religion without being of the Jewish race.

The question as to the parentage of Jesus resolves itself therefore into the question of a migration of Jews into Galilee after the fifth century B.C. There was such a migration, but, as concerns Galilee, it could not have been large.

As the pressure of priestly rule increased, the more intelligent part of the population, those in whom some of the better stock still survived, would escape into the less irksome life away from Jerusalem, but they would be attracted to the cities, not to little farming communities.

Such migration of Jews into Galilee, however, as did occur was carefully weeded out in the year 135 B.C.,

for Simon Maccabæus, after his victory over the Syrians, compelled all the Jews in Galilee to return to Jerusalem.

There remain, therefore, only 135 years for the possible wandering back of a few Jews into Galilee and the chances that the parents of Jesus were of pure Jewish stock are reduced to a very small fraction.

It is very much more probable that there were in his ancestry much larger traces of Indo-European stock, either Amorite or Greek.

This, if it could be proved, which, naturally, it cannot, would account for some things in what we know of him which have never been satisfactorily explained.

His mental attitude was instinctively anti-Semitic. God, with him, was a father, not a tyrant, and man a son and agent, not a slave. He was not a fatalist and he hated all phases of mechanical religion. Righteousness, with him, resulted from the spontaneity of goodness and was never a mere conformity to law. Jesus could not have been what he was, if he had descended from the unmixed Jewish race.

The great religion, which was the outcome of his heart, never could be understood nor appreciated by the Semitic race, but, from the beginning, awoke sympathy and responsive echoes from the heart of the Indo-Europeans.

#### THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES

Jesus warned his friends to "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," realising that, unless they could break away from the beliefs, traditions, and customs under which they had grown up, they would be unable to

attain that power of moral perception and self-guidance necessary for citizenship in the Kingdom of God.

It was impossible for them to heed his advice, or even to understand what he meant; for ignorant men, accustomed to take their beliefs ready made, always under the control of authority and in the habit of regarding established customs as part of the natural order of things, cannot escape from their servitude and in the dignity of a new-found manhood establish themselves as independent centres of spiritual perception and moral power, letting the light of the larger possibilities of life shine among their fellow-men.

It was inevitable, therefore, that those who were attached to Jesus and had become enthusiasts for the belief that he was the Messiah should simply add this belief to their existing stock, interpreting him and his work in accordance with their inherited ideas. When, as a result of their zealous propaganda, their new belief was spread among the people of the Jewish race living in the cities about the Mediterranean Sea, and found acceptance not only among them but also among many of the proselytes from other races, there went along with it, and apparently as a constituent part of it, the beliefs, traditions, and customs of the Pharisees.

Thus it came to pass that, as Christianity slowly emerged as a new religion and finally broke away from Judaism, the leaven of the Pharisees had become so entirely ingrained in the consciousness of its adherents that it was no longer possible to heed or to follow the warning of Jesus. Even Paul, to whose remarkable teaching and efforts the separation was largely due, let go of only so much of the Pharisaic inheritance as was incompatible with a world-wide religion, circum-

cision, the tyranny of the law, and race exclusiveness being the things against which he chiefly contended; but he kept the rest of his Pharisaism and prided himself on being a Pharisee. He kept his rabbinical theology, his rabbinical view of the Scriptures and the rabbinical mode of interpreting them; he retained and developed his inherited ideas concerning sin and sacrifice and accepted as true many of the strange apocalyptic delusions of his day.

It is necessary to understand what some of the more prominent features of Pharisaism were and to realise that it was a comparatively new thing, but little more than a hundred years old at the time of Jesus; for the Pharisees had come into prominence as the reactionary party in the time of the Maccabees and, acquiring control under Alexandra, who became sole ruler in the year 78 B.C., had proceeded to intensify the distinctive features of Judaism and to raise such a hedge about the observance of the law as should make any future adjustment of relations with the rest of the world impossible.

The Semitic idea of God contained but two features, arbitrary will and absolute power. He did whatever he pleased, without any considerations of reason, justice, or mercy, and man was simply as clay in the hands of a potter.

Although this idea had led through the intensity of race conceit to a sort of monolatry, which was the nearest approach to monotheism of which the Semitic mind was capable, the Pharisees, under the tutelage of the scribes, had removed this God ever farther from the world and men, until he had become distant, isolated, and unapproachable, leaving an immeasurable void, to be filled from extra-Jewish sources with such beings

as popular legends, the débris of old religions, or philosophical speculation might supply.

This process of filling the void between God and man was already well established in the time of Jesus, among the learned by personifications of "Wisdom," "The Word," "The Glory," etc., among the common people by gradations of angels and by a Devil and his demons, derived from Persian sources.

The Pharisees, too, were zealous exponents and defenders of the law, as it had been invented by the priests and taught and applied by the scribes. It had been expanded into six hundred and thirteen distinct rules, which penetrated to the most minute acts of daily life, and these had been developed by a weary line of comments and decisions, complications and subtleties, into a confused system, which none but the learned could understand and none but the people of leisure could attempt to follow. What was supposed to be righteousness was a mere external conformity, without vitality, spontaneity, or moral power. Since it was dependent upon legal training, those who knew not the law were "cursed," while the very men who deceived, bullied, and despised the common people were able by tricks of casuistry to evade its most inconvenient provisions for themselves. It was the hollowness and insincerity, the externalism and hard, narrow legalism induced by this pernicious system which brought down upon them the scorn and wrath of Jesus, who denounced them as "children of Hell." (Matt. xxiii, 15.) Yet his own disciples were brought up under this system and, although they caught some of his larger, sweeter spirit, they nevertheless retained and transmitted to the Christian world the Pharisaic attitude, which interpreted righteousness as a keeping of rules, and so made

inevitable the conflict of the centuries between the letter that killeth and the spirit that giveth life. The Pharisees, also, were the earnest disseminators of the extraordinary notions concerning the Hebrew Scriptures which had been invented by the priests and scribes, and developed by them during the four or five centuries before the time of Jesus. The canon of Scriptures was not quite complete in his day, but, as it had approached completion, the scribes had taught that God was the author of the Scriptures and was directly responsible for every sentence, word, and letter which they contained and that they were, therefore, absolutely, infallibly correct, not only in their literal meaning, but also in as many allegorical, mystical, and other fantastic interpretations as an uncontrolled imagination could wring from them.

The prophets before the exile had protested grandly against the whole priestly system, but the majority of the people could not read. Only those in control of the situation could read Hebrew at all and we may be perfectly sure that when the Scriptures were read in the synagogues the protests of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah were carefully omitted.

The rabbinical view of the Scriptures, diligently disseminated by the Pharisees, was held by the disciples of Jesus and was received from them without question by the vast populations of Europe, as they accepted the Christian religion, even to the fictitious authorship, as held by the scribes, who taught that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, David the Psalms, and the several prophets all of the writings which bear their names.

Jesus had a wonderful intuition when he realised the danger, and it must be evident that any intelligent

understanding of his attitude and teaching depends upon the elimination from such records of his life as have survived of all vestiges of the leaven of the Pharisees, that, recognising the nature and force of the hostility which temporarily defeated his work and finally accomplished his death, we may both rescue him from his enemies and his religion from that persistent dominion of the leaven of the Pharisees which still obscures its light and still hinders its work, as an inspiration, an enthusiasm, and a joyful service for God and humanity at the present day.

It will appear in the course of our study that the leaven of the Pharisees was not the only force which obscured the religion of Jesus and hindered its beneficent work; for, in passing beyond the confines of Judæa, it came into contact with many of the religions of the pagan world and the speculative tendencies of Greek thought and the same thing happened again which had taken place among the Jewish adherents of the new belief. Men adjusted it to their existing stock of religious ideas, beliefs, and practices, so that, before three hundred years had passed, the new religion, known as Christianity, while it preserved and transmitted the teaching of Jesus, buried it beneath a new edition of the old beliefs, and practices of paganism. For those who were more intellectual, speculation obscured the realities of spiritual perception and the dogmas of theology usurped the place of religion, creating a barrier to the progress of the human mind which only after the lapse of sixteen centuries is beginning to show breaches in the walls, but still blocks the way for millions of men to the truth which would make them free and to the reality of a personal faith which is in itself the evidence of things unseen.

It is necessary to bear in mind the meaning of that great word "faith." It is a spiritual perception and force, the soul of man exerting itself to lay hold of the things which are spiritually discerned, becoming conscious of God as Him "in whom we live and move and have our being" and acquiring courage and power from Him for the work and warfare of life. The multitude, ever careless in its use of words, identifies faith with credulity, the natural capacity of untutored minds for believing what is incredible, or the acquired habit of assenting to dogmatic statements which it does not understand, because they are imposed by authority and are venerable by age. As a result of this unfortunate confusion of thought, diligently fostered by the various ecclesiasticisms, it is quite customary to say of one who has outgrown the myths, legends, and fables, with the scientific and historical blunders which were taught him in his childhood as an essential part of religion, that he has "lost his faith," a statement which is unjust to the individual and false to the facts. For one who has ever had any real faith can no more lose it than he can forget his mother tongue, but it grows ever deeper and stronger in proportion as he leaves behind the delusions of the darker ages of mankind and presses forward towards the larger consciousness of a son of God.

The credulous multitude has never had any faith and it is the grand mission of the Higher Criticism to take up and carry on the work of Jesus, emancipating them from the control of all external authorities, that, listening to his appeal to the individual heart and conscience, as it echoes across the troubled sea of the intervening centuries, "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you,"



they may feel within themselves the stirring of a new manhood and, entering with enthusiasm into the dignity of stewardship, may help to build among their fellow-men the realised Kingdom of God.

## THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

### INTRODUCTION

#### §§ I-IV

§ I: *Mark i, 1-8; Luke iii, 1-17; Matt. iii, 1-12*

THE gospel which Jesus preached was the gospel of the Kingdom of God, the good news that God was soon coming to establish his personal dominion in a world from which all poverty, suffering, and crime had been eliminated, in a world where simple, honest folk might live their lives in peace, comfort, and joy.

The gospel which Mark announces as his theme is not the same, but is a gospel about Jesus himself, whom he calls Jesus Christ. Since "Christ" is the shortened English form of the Greek adjective *Christos*, "anointed," which was used as the equivalent of the Hebrew "Messiah," his purpose in writing is to prove that Jesus is the Messiah. His work is, therefore, to be apologetic and not simply historical, a fact which needs to be borne in mind, since actual facts cannot always be identical with an author's interpretation of them. It is necessary to realise the existence of these two gospels and their relations to each other, which is that of the egg to its shell. Jesus did not preach about himself, but about the Kingdom of God, which he believed was soon coming, and about the necessary fitness for citizenship, when it should come. The friends, on the other hand, who were sincerely attached

to him, began soon after his death to preach a totally different gospel the burden of which was that he was the Messiah. They won converts to this theory and it soon became part of the shell, which has preserved and transmitted the real gospel of Jesus through the centuries, the rest of the shell being constructed of pagan elements, which appealed more directly to the pagan mind.

While in most Christian ages many a brave and gentle soul, penetrating the shell, has discovered the faith and hope and spirit of Jesus as a light and a power for all the varying exigencies of human life, the multitude, ever of duller mould, has always mistaken the shell for the egg, and from its many incongruous elements, gathered at random from Jewish and pagan soil, has developed the rival ecclesiasticisms, the ponderous and discordant theologies, together with the wars, persecutions, and fanaticisms, which have so often disfigured the face of Christendom and have prevented the gospel of Jesus from doing its beneficent work among men.

It is the grand mission of the Higher Criticism to break the shell and so to bring the actual gospel of Jesus into prominence, in place of the theoretical gospel about him by which it has been so long obscured.

The first obstacle to be removed is the original blunder which made Jesus a Messiah.

We find in Mark's Gospel the title "Son of God" also applied to Jesus. It is possible that the expression was not used by Mark, but was interpolated by a later hand, as the words do not exist in some manuscripts. However that may be, the term "Son of God" to the Jewish mind was simply an equivalent of the term "Messiah."

All Oriental kings, Jewish kings among the rest, were always called "Sons of God." Among the Jews an expected descendant of David, who was to restore the ancient kingdom and rule over it, would naturally be called a "Son of God."

Among the Greeks, however, the term meant something totally different and was taken literally. Both their mythology and their fictitious history were full of supposed actual sons of some god by a human mother and, when they found Jesus called a "Son of God" in the Christian teaching and writings, they naturally supposed that he was but a more recent addition to their long list of gods and heroes who were imagined to have come into being in the same unusual way. It is quite possible, therefore, that these words were added to Mark's Gospel at a later date in order to accommodate it to pagan ideas.

The Jewish Christians preached about "Jesus Messiah." Those who preached the new beliefs to Greeks translated "Messiah" into "*Christos*," "Anointed." The Greeks, unfamiliar with Jewish notions, took it for granted that "*Christos*" was a proper name. By reason of this blunder, for the furtherance of which Paul is much to blame, if, indeed, he was not the first to perpetrate it, the custom became established and has prevailed to the present day of speaking of Jesus as "Jesus Christ," or simply as "Christ." For those who accept the Jewish notions about a "Messiah" and identify Jesus with that imaginary personage it is perfectly proper, while for those who are out of sympathy with such ideas the term expresses a belief which they do not hold and they must confine themselves to the use of the name "Jesus."

The better educated among the Greeks and Romans

must often have been perplexed at hearing "Anointed" used as if it were a proper name. Suetonius, at least, thought that he had detected an error of ignorance and that what was really meant was "*Chrestos*" (long e), "The Illustrious One," used as a title.

The second and third verses are apparently also a later interpolation, since nowhere else does Mark quote ancient prophecies and claim their fulfilment. This unfortunate and mischievous custom grew up later and reached its culmination with the final editing of Matthew's Gospel.

The quotation purports to be from the writings of Isaiah, yet this is true only of the second half, that contained in the third verse. The first part is from the book of an unknown author, afterwards called Malachi, "messenger," either because he prophesied of a messenger, or thought of himself as such. When the Jews were taken away into exile and their temple destroyed, they imagined that Jahveh had withdrawn to some unknown region in the distant North. Some of those who returned from exile were not over-zealous in rebuilding the temple, but the prophets Haggai and Zechariah stimulated enough interest to complete the work by their brilliant promises that, as soon as it was finished, Jahveh would return to take up his abode in it and that then the Golden Age would begin, the great king Zerubbabel whom they already recognised as the "Branch" promised by Isaiah being on the ground.

The temple was finished in the year 516 B. C., but none of the wonderful things which had been promised followed its completion. People grew indifferent and careless, old evils sprang up again, those who had grown rich oppressed the poor, the priests tolerated abuses and shared them, the observance of the law became lax,

and men even ventured to bring mouldy bread and lame and blind animals to the temple. The party which still held to the expectations found a spokesman in the anonymous prophet, who assured the people that all would come true as promised. Jahveh would suddenly come to his temple, but he would first send a messenger to prepare his way, who would execute summary vengeance upon the priests and those who oppressed the poor. Then, when the people paid tithes and offered sacrifices in accordance with the law, Jahveh would pour out such a flood of material blessings that there would not be room enough to receive them. This and all similar prophecies had reference to men living at the time and was expected to produce so complete a reformation that the Golden Age would come as its natural result. No prophet ever imagined that people would reform on the prospect of wonderful things which might happen in some far-off future century. The expectations were not fulfilled, but the prophecy remained for convenient encouragement at any time and, although it had promised a messenger who should announce the return of Jahveh to his rebuilt temple, it did not disturb the Jewish mind, which was totally lacking in historical consciousness, to imagine five hundred years later that it predicted a messenger who should proclaim the coming of a Messiah to overthrow the dominion of Rome and establish the sovereignty of the "Saints of the Most High." The Christians took advantage of this misconstrued prophecy and, by claiming that John was the messenger foretold by the anonymous prophet and that he had predicted a great successor, they seemed to have a strong argument that Jesus was the Messiah.

The application of the other prophecy to John is still

more extraordinary. It is given at length by Luke and is from the writings of another unknown prophet, a man entirely carried away by enthusiasm, who lived among the Jews in Babylon in the later years of the exile and whose writings are included in the Book of Isaiah, beginning with the 40th chapter.

When the exiles in Babylon heard of the victory of Cyrus over Croesus, King of Lydia, at Sardes, in 547, or 546 B. C., the delirium of the fanatical party became a perfect frenzy of wrath and enthusiasm, wrath to be sated by the wholesale slaughter of the Babylonians (Psalm 137) and enthusiasm over the expected return to Judæa, the rebuilding of the temple, and the wonderful things which would follow. As regarded the return to Judæa, the prophet declared that they would not take the long northern route, but would all march straight across the Syrian desert, where Jahveh himself would make a great highway, with abundant springs of water and pleasant trees for shade. A voice would precede the host crying: "In the wilderness prepare ye the way of Jahveh, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley will be exalted and every mountain and hill will be made low; and the crooked will be made straight and the rough places plain; and the glory of Jahveh will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together."

This was magnificent, but the highway across the desert did not materialise, and such of the exiles as eventually returned to Judæa were obliged to follow the only practicable route. The Jewish Christians imagined that they discovered in this dazzling dream of the prophet of the exile a prophecy of John the Baptist. In both cases there was a wilderness and a voice, which seemed to be striking coincidences, and they read

the old prophecy: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness," whereas they should have read: "The voice of him that crieth, In the wilderness prepare ye the way." All Christendom has perpetuated this blunder.

John the Baptist had attracted a multitude to his preaching and had created a profound impression. He was a hermit from the desert where he had long practised extreme asceticism, but he had come back to the haunts of men with a burning message of denunciation, judgment, and wrath, hoping to reform the multitude through terror. Jesus afterwards bore witness to his greatness as a moral force, but declared that the least in the Kingdom of God was greater than he, because the sweeter and more rational life is more fruitful in results and because a fountain of righteous impulses within the heart produces a character and conduct which are impossible under any mere conformity to law. The wildness of his looks and dress, together with the severity of his asceticism, appealed to the popular imagination, and under the pressure of excitement many were temporarily converted, yet not long afterwards some of the same people said that John "had a devil" (Matt. xi, 18.)

Baptism was not a new custom, but had been in vogue for centuries all over the Orient, in India and in Egypt, among the Persians and Etruscans, in the religion of Mithras and in the Greek mysteries; for it was inevitable that, at a certain stage of culture, the cleansing and life-giving power of water should make it a fitting symbol of the cleansing and quickening of the soul. The Jews had probably adopted it from the Babylonians during the exile, and since their return had baptised proselytes, as the symbol of the washing away of their



former beliefs. With John it was the symbol and record of the cleansing of the moral nature, which had already taken place as the result of repentance, and could not have been considered by him as a means "for the remission of sins," as was taught in many of the pagan religions and afterwards by the Christians. He believed that a Messiah was coming who would strengthen the wills of the faithful by a baptism with the Holy Ghost, consuming all wickedness and the hopelessly wicked in a baptism by fire.

Before the middle of the second century the Christians had come to think that baptism by both water and the Holy Ghost was necessary, and it was reported among them that Jesus had said, "Except a man be born of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." (John iii, 3.) Thus, by imperceptible degrees they fell back into externalities of religious observance from which a better appreciation of his teaching would have delivered them. Baptism acquired among them the supposed efficacy assigned to circumcision among the Jews, as a tangible guarantee of divine favour, together with magical theories as to its operation which made it attractive to the pagan mind, while the operation of the Spirit of God was gradually confined to strictly ecclesiastical channels, the bishops being eventually imagined to be its sole dispensers.

§ II: *Mark i, 9-11; Luke iii, 21, 22; Matt. iii, 13-17*

The excitement aroused by the preaching of John the Baptist spread as far as Galilee, and among the crowds attracted by it came Jesus of Nazareth. This is the earliest mention of him in the canonical Gospels.

and his baptism must be recognised as an actual historical fact, else it never would have found a place in the narrative, for it seemed to make him in a way subordinate to John, which was incompatible with the ideas of the Christians concerning him. They afterwards tried to soften down the implication and verses 14 and 15 ("I have need to be baptised of thee," etc.) were interpolated in Matthew's Gospel for that purpose, but it is altogether improbable that John recognised him as differing in any way from other Galilean pilgrims or that he knew him, or was related to him, as the Christians afterwards liked to believe.

It is stated that immediately after his baptism Jesus had a wonderful experience, that, while no one else heard or saw anything, "he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him" and that he heard a voice from heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." If Jesus had this experience, it could not have been known, unless he had related it to some of his disciples afterwards, but this is hardly probable for various reasons. He certainly had the clearest and strongest consciousness of God of any one who ever lived and this, in connection with the new enthusiasm over the immediate coming of the Kingdom of God which he had acquired from John, would inevitably make the moment of his baptism the occasion of great spiritual exaltation, as the consecration of his life to the preparation of his fellow countrymen for that great event. He would naturally afterwards speak of his great work as dating from that time, but men do not relate their highest spiritual experiences, least of all Jesus, who found no one to sympathise with his highest moods and larger perceptions. A generation later, however, the Christ-

ians were quite sure that something extraordinary had happened at the time of his baptism; for, since they had made it the fundamental article of their belief that he was the Messiah, they had begun to find it necessary to explain how it was that an ordinary man had attained that exalted position. The baptism seemed to furnish the convenient opportunity. God, they said, had anointed him with the Holy Ghost at that time, thus making him the Messiah, and had then disclosed to him his high calling, by applying to him the words of the second Psalm. This Psalm, together with the first Psalm, was prefixed to the first book of Psalms, which contains those from the third to the forty-first inclusive. It is "Messianic" and could not have been written until the ideas which it sets forth and which are those of the apocalyptic literature had come into vogue. The author may have had in mind a certain king or prince, but more probably the whole Jewish people. The words "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" need to be borne in mind, because they are misquoted in the gospel.

This explanation as to how Jesus came to be the Messiah does not belong to the earliest days of the new religion. Paul never heard of it and does not mention it in his writings. It was enough for him and for the first generation of Christians generally to believe that the heavenly Messiah had entered into and taken possession of the body of Jesus. The belief in a "spiritual body" which he and many of the first generation of Christians believed that they had seen, as the resurrected body of Jesus, and which figured so largely in the Gnostic systems early in the second century sufficed without further explanation. The second generation of Christians, however, which rapidly mate-

rialised the belief in the resurrection into the story of a physical resurrection, found itself confronted with the question as to how Jesus became the Messiah, and the story of the descent of the Spirit at the time of his baptism was its solution of the problem. The earliest written gospel, of about the year 70 A.D., contained no other solution.

When, however, the new religion had spread into foreign lands and converts with no Jewish traditions and no Messianic theories had taken the expression "Son of God" as applied to Jesus literally, and had developed in consequence the theory of a supernatural birth in accordance with pagan ideas, the Jewish theory was modified and its record in the gospel altered to conform to the new belief. Then it was that the quotation from the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," was changed to read, "Thou art my Son, in whom I am well pleased," thus conveying the idea not that Jesus was then and there made the Messiah, "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power" (Acts x, 38), but simply that God expressed his satisfaction in his miraculously-born son. That this change was really made is evident from the Gospel of the Hebrews which, as it did not afterwards become canonical, was not amended to suit the new views, but gives the quotation correctly, as does also one of the early manuscripts of Luke's Gospel.

It is interesting to note that, while theories which connected the "Messiahship" of Jesus with his baptism were general among the Jewish Christians and stories of a miraculous birth became popular later among both Jews and pagans, the author of the fourth Gospel, writing at least a generation after the latest of the Synoptic authors, swept away both theories and substi-

tuted for them a grander interpretation based upon the most sublime speculations of Alexandrian philosophy. According to him Jesus was not baptised at all, and had no vision and heard no voice, but John had a vision, which assured him that Jesus was the Messiah. There was no miraculous birth, but "the Word was made flesh," the writer did not presume to say how. These three views are mutually exclusive, but it is one of the curiosities of religious history that a majority of Christians have always tried to hold all three at once, the Jewish view, the pagan view, and the philosophical view, simply because they found them all in the gospels and have not realised how rapidly beliefs developed when Christianity was young.

The Jews had long been taught that the Spirit of God was "like a dove," because one of their commentators had so described the "brooding" upon the face of the waters mentioned in the Book of Genesis. The Greeks, on the other hand, conceived of the "Good Spirit" in the form of a serpent. Both notions are relics of animism, but the Spirit of God will remain as a living force in the souls of men long after the dove has disappeared from among our church decorations.

The growth of the legend is indicated in the gospels. In Mark's Gospel it is Jesus alone who sees and hears wonderful things, in Luke's others apparently hear and see, while in Matthew's the voice speaks to others, not to Jesus. When the fourth Gospel was written the whole account was transformed into that of a vision which John had and by means of which he was enabled to identify the Messiah, calling attention to him as "The Lamb of God."

The statement in Luke's Gospel, vii, 18, that John the Baptist, hearing during his imprisonment of the

growing reputation of Jesus, sent two of his disciples to him with the question: "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another," makes it evident that, if John baptised Jesus, he had paid no special attention to him at the time and had known of nothing extraordinary in connection with his baptism.

This statement, which belongs to the earliest layer of traditions embodied in the gospel, shows that the story of the vision and the voice is a pure invention of the second Christian generation for the purpose of explaining how a man had become the Messiah and that it has, therefore, no historical foundation.

§ III: *Mark i, 12, 13; Luke iv, 1-13; Matt; iv, 1-11*

Some of the Greek kings of Syria had made a laudable attempt to civilise the Jews by bringing them into harmony with the culture of the world, but had thereby aroused a bitter opposition to everything that was Greek, which had culminated in war when Antiochus made his unfortunate blunder of trying to abolish the Jewish religion. While, however, the party of fanatics, afterwards known as Pharisees, was occupied in protecting themselves and their fellow countrymen against Western influences, not even allowing their sons to learn Greek, but putting it criminally on a par with the raising of hogs, they had left the rear unguarded, and for many generations beliefs, notions, and superstitions had flowed in in a steady stream from the East and in time had transformed the popular religion of the Jews quite as completely as if they had succumbed to the culture of the Greeks. The Book of Daniel had marked the beginning of the flood of Oriental ideas, Babylonian and Persian, which accumulated

rapidly in the two succeeding centuries. Monotheism or rather monolatry, which had grown up during and after the exile, had given way to Persian dualism. A good God and a bad god were contending for the sovereignty of the world, assisted by hosts of angels and demons. The bad god was in the ascendant and had become the "Prince of this world," but the good God would eventually win the victory through a Saviour, a warrior, a mighty deliverer, who would conquer the Devil and rescue the "Saints of the Most High." There would eventually be a physical resurrection, that those who had died in this expectation might enjoy their share in the victory. This was virtually the Zoroastrian religion, but it had taken fast hold of the Jewish people under the zealous propagandism of the Pharisaic party. Many features of the Persian myth had been added to the Jewish notion of a Messiah and had developed the expectation of the great deliverer who in conquering the Devil would also overthrow the Roman Empire and, rescuing the Jews from tyranny and oppression, give them the sovereignty of the world.

The belief was not only flattering to Jewish pride, but it also afforded a welcome prospect of relief for the multitude of the common people who suffered much from the oppression and cruelty of a foreign dominion, the lawlessness of the rich, and the frequent miscarriage of justice. It was no wonder that they found their dearest consolation in the hope of a Messiah, nor that they were on the lookout and asked the question of many a promising man, "Art thou he that should come?" nor that they often threw themselves with fanatical frenzy into the following of any one who gave himself out as the Messiah, as thousands had done not long before the time of Jesus in the case of Judas the

Galilean. It is impossible for us modern men, accustomed to the placid routine of well-regulated lives, to transport ourselves in thought into the midst of a population which is either crushed by the insanity of despair, or lives in the wildest delirium of hope; and yet, only in so far as we can realise the environment can we make real to ourselves what Jesus meant to the first generation of Jewish Christians. To them he was the Messiah. He had overcome the Devil and would return from heaven soon, very soon, to establish his kingdom and sovereignty. Wars and oppressions would cease, diseases would no more afflict humanity, because the demons which caused them would be put to flight. The new fertility of the earth would abolish hunger, the sifting out of bad men would put an end to injustice and crime, and, in the realised Kingdom of God, peace and plenty, righteousness and joy would abide for ever.

It was a glorious dream, the most transcendent which ever illuminated the heart of man. To Jesus the coming of the Kingdom soon and suddenly was an absolute reality and the source of his overwhelming enthusiasm. Of gentler heart and larger sympathy than John, it was not so much the preceding judgment which impressed him as the relief which the Kingdom would bring to the poor, the sick and the hungry, the oppressed, the unfortunate and the weary, and he went out to preach the good news of the coming of the Kingdom, that a multitude might be ready in the wedding garment of pure hearts and noble lives for the joys of citizenship.

He did not think of himself as the Messiah, nor give himself out as such, in fact he was so absorbed in his message about the Kingdom and its coming that he did not think of himself at all. The early Jewish Christ-



ians, however, held the belief that there was to be a Messiah and that Jesus was he. To this belief they went out to win converts and in aid of this belief the original gospels were written.

Mark assumes in his gospel the literal truth of the vision and voice at the baptism, believing that Jesus had the Messianic dignity conferred upon him at that time and that he was also made acquainted with the fact. He therefore assumes that he began his public work in the full consciousness of being the Messiah, but that for some unaccountable reason he did not wish to have it known.

It was a recognised fact that Jesus had been baptised by John. After that event there was nothing known of him until he began to preach in Capernaum, after John was put into prison. It seemed to the early Christians, however, that, being the Messiah and being conscious of the fact, he must have begun his work as such by having a personal encounter with the Devil. They thought that the Spirit which had taken possession of him, and which it seemed to them had suspended his volition, drove him out into the wilderness to this inevitable conflict. Mark does not go into details as to what happened in the wilderness, because when he wrote the story had not been amplified as it was later. When we turn to the longer narratives by Luke and Matthew, we find that in the generation after Mark wrote the Christians were able to specify some of the extraordinary things which were supposed to have happened during the imagined sojourn of Jesus in the desert and yet, upon closer examination, these narratives, although in the form of history, are seen to be in reality only the survival of early Christian apologetics. The Christians, in trying to win converts to the belief that Jesus was the

Messiah, were constantly meeting the objection that he had not in any way filled the rôle of a Messiah, as it was portrayed by the popular consciousness. People said that a Messiah should not have been obliged to suffer poverty, anxiety, and persecution, but would naturally have used his superhuman power for the relief of his bodily needs. The Christians answered that this was a temptation of the Devil, that Jesus had been all the greater because he had refused to make his superhuman power subservient to his physical wants and that, as a reward for his fidelity in refusing to make bread out of stones, the angels had brought him food, which recalled the supposed miraculous feeding of the Israelites in the desert and the good offices of the ravens to Elijah. Again the people retorted that Moses and Elijah had done many wonderful things, but that the real Messiah, when he came, would surpass them in astonishing exhibitions of his power. Jesus, however, had wrought no miracles and had even replied to the Pharisees, when they demanded some evidence of his ability, that there would be none. (Mk. viii, 12. Lk. xi, 29.) It was evident, they said, that Jesus could not be the Messiah, for did they not read in the ninety-first Psalm, "He will give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They will bear thee in their hands, that thou hurt not thy foot against a stone." Surely this was a "Messianic" prophecy, they said, and a real Messiah would have proved his Messiahship by jumping from the temple roof and coming down unhurt upon the rocks below, to which the Christians replied that this also was a temptation of the Devil, for, while so astonishing a thing might have won the adhesion of a crowd, that crowd would not have been transformed thereby into a fitness for citizenship in the

Kingdom of God and so the real work of a Messiah would have gained nothing. But there was another and more serious objection in the popular mind. The Messiah was to be a great prince and warrior, the sovereign ruler of a wide-spreading empire. He was to lead forth an army to victory and, returning with the spoils of war, establish his dominion over the nations of the earth. Jesus, however, had raised no army and aspired to no political power, but on the contrary had been rejected by his own people and crucified by the Romans. He could not be the Messiah. To this the Christians replied that this popular expectation was also a temptation of the Devil, for, as the kingdoms of this world really belonged to him, no one could aspire to rule them, acquiring dominion by force, without first acknowledging his supremacy.

Thus the story of the "temptations" is seen to be a record of early apologetics expressed in the naïve and superstitious form, in which alone it could appeal to the popular consciousness; for it seemed perfectly natural to the Oriental mind of that day that the Devil should fly with one through the air, nor did it shock their geographical consciousness to be told of a mountain from which one could see "all the kingdoms of the world." In the Gospel of the Hebrews, which was in common use among the Jewish Christians, it is stated that Mt. Tabor is the mountain in question, but both Luke and Matthew suppressed the name, perhaps because they realised that no such extensive view was to be had from its summit. According to the same gospel, it was not the Devil who carried Jesus "up into an high mountain," but we read, immediately after the account of the baptism, "Then my mother the Holy Ghost took me by one of my hairs and carried me away to

the top of Mt. Tabor." The suggestion for this statement was found in the Book of Ezekiel (viii, 3) in which the author stated that he had had a similar experience, but the remarkable feature of this passage from the Gospel of the Hebrews is that it declares the Holy Ghost to have been the mother of Jesus. If this gospel had not been supplanted by others and finally suppressed when the canon of New Testament writings was made, Christian theology would have followed quite a different course, issuing in a doctrine of the Trinity formed on the common Oriental model of father, mother, and child; but, at an early day, the large preponderance of Greeks among the Christians naturally suppressed this form of the doctrine for the simple reason that the Holy Ghost in Greek is neuter.

The pagan mind, however, accustomed for centuries to the worship of the "eternal feminine," avenged itself in the fifth century upon the philosophical doctrine of the Trinity by introducing the worship of the "Mother of God," in place of that of Artemis, Athena, Ceres, Venus, Isis, and others, which it had lost.

In the year 1854 the Church of Rome virtually substituted a Divine Quaternity for the older Trinity, since the multitude can never recognise the fine distinction between "*dulia*" and "*hyperdulia*," while the Jesuits, with their more recent Trinity—"Jesus, Mary, Joseph"—have restored the still older pagan model.

Many serious and scholarly students of the life of Jesus assume with Mark that he really believed himself to be the Messiah from the time of his baptism, and therefore that the temptation to adapt his life and work to the popular notions was very serious and was only overcome after severe struggles with himself. There is, however, no evidence that he thought himself to be the

Messiah and, had he done so, the popular notions could have brought no temptations to him.

He could not have imagined himself winning converts by displays of power, even had he thought himself gifted with the power to work miracles. He was too great for that, and the converts which he sought were not to be won in that way. Nor could he imagine himself organising an army of revolt, attacking the legions of Syria and founding a Jewish empire. It was God's Kingdom in which he was interested, not his own. God was almighty and would establish his Kingdom when it pleased him. His mission was to prepare men for its coming. The idea of a political Messiahship was never for a moment a temptation to him. He had great trials and perplexities, many sorrows and moments of despair, but such temptations as Jewish Christians imagined for him he never had. In fact, these stories of the temptations of a divine, or divinely appointed, deliverer were part of the floating mythology of the whole Oriental world and were told in very similar form of Buddha and Zoroaster. We may safely conclude, therefore, that the story of the "temptations" has not the slightest historical foundation, but resulted from a strange mixture of mythology and apologetics. We come now to the part of the narrative which does contain true history.

§ IV: *Mark i, 14, 15; Luke iii, 19, 20; iv, 14, 15; Matt. iv, 12-17*

After the imprisonment of John, Jesus began to preach in Galilee. The burden of his preaching was the good news that the Kingdom of God was at hand. It is necessary to understand what he meant by it. As he

never gave any new explanations of it, he certainly meant what the majority of the Jewish people in his day understood by it, which was that Jahveh would soon establish his personal reign in Jerusalem, either with or without the aid of an agent called the Messiah. The materialistic and political amplifications of this belief did not appeal to Jesus at all, but he derived his overwhelming enthusiasm from his sure conviction that God would soon reign in the hearts and lives of the Jewish people, abolishing all injustice and iniquity, and causing his will to be done on earth as it was done in heaven.

His entire preaching was simply an enlargement upon the one theme, The Kingdom of God is at hand, while all his efforts were in the direction of making as many as possible believe so entirely that the Kingdom was really coming as to alter their lives to correspond with its ideals and so be found worthy of citizenship, when it should come.

The invitation of Jesus, addressed indiscriminately to the Jewish multitude, discloses certain elements of his belief which are often overlooked and have often been contradicted in Christian theology. For it shows that there was no thought in his mind of any foreordination of men to belief or unbelief, to virtue or vice, nor that the case of any man was so hopeless, or his will so weak, that he could not alter the whole attitude and tendency of his life, under the inspiration of a new ideal.

Jesus undoubtedly lived for some time in Capernaum and preached there, but it was not, as the Christians afterwards believed and as Matthew's Gospel stated in an interpolated passage, "that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet," both because

an ancient prophecy concerning Jews and Babylonians had not the most remote reference to a Messiah, and because, if he did things only in order that some old prophecy might be fulfilled, he was either acting a rôle or was acted upon by some external force. In either case he would have been without volition and, in losing his personality, would cease to be interesting.

## I. JESUS IN CAPERNAUM

### §§ V-XXIX

§ V: *Mark i, 16-20; Luke v, 1-11; Matt. iv, 18-22*

Jesus began his public work among the villages and towns along the north-western shore of the Lake of Galilee. He needed men to help him in spreading as rapidly as possible the good news of the coming of the Kingdom and found them mainly among the fishermen of that region. He must have known them and they must have felt the charm of his wonderful personality before he asked them to become fishers of men. Perhaps, as the writer of the fourth Gospel afterwards thought, he had made their acquaintance among the Galileans who had journeyed to the preaching of John.

Those who were invited knew at once what was meant by being "fishers of men." They were to carry on the work inaugurated by John, but in a different and sweeter way, of which they must have already learned the attractiveness from an acquaintance with the teaching of Jesus. They were not asked to give up their occupations and to break their family ties, for they continued to earn their living, and Jesus found a welcome refuge in the home of Peter, who lived in Capernaum. The call for volunteers who were willing



to surrender everything in an attack upon the stronghold of the Jewish religion in Jerusalem came later.

Mark records the fact that the first disciples were two pairs of brothers, first Peter and Andrew, then James and John. Matthew gives the same names, but Luke, for some reason, omitted Andrew, although he must have had the Gospel by Mark before him. He thought that the call to be fishers of men must have followed a remarkable catch of fish, which had impressed these men by the supernatural knowledge of Jesus. Mark gives two accounts later of wonderful fishing, both being different versions of the same story, but Luke introduced the account here evidently for allegorical effect. He also (iv, 16-30) introduces an account of preaching by Jesus at Nazareth at the beginning of his ministry and out of the connection given in the earlier Gospel. That the words which he assigns to Jesus on that occasion are due to his own literary ability and cannot be historical is evident from the fact that they contradict the earlier record of the preaching of Jesus. For he does not proclaim the coming of the Kingdom and call upon men to repent, but, reading a prophecy believed to be Messianic, applies it to himself and thus claims before the people of Nazareth to be the Messiah, which is impossible. That Luke did violence to history in making him begin his work in Nazareth is also evident from the 23rd verse, in which reference is made to work already done at Capernaum, while the covert reference to great blessings in store for the heathen, in preference to Jews, could not have occurred to any one until the great Church among the Gentiles had become an accomplished fact, least of all to Jesus, who bade his disciples confine their work to the lost sheep of Israel.

§ VI: *Mark i, 21-28; Luke iv, 31-37*

Jesus very early in his ministry found a home in Capernaum and taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath. The synagogue was an institution which had grown up during the exile in Babylonia.

More than a hundred years before that event the people of the little Kingdom of Judæa, through the destruction of the stronger Kingdom of Israel on the north, had been thrown upon their own resources and had fallen more and more under the control of the priests, who, with the aid of some of the prophets, had invented a new law, pretending that it was an ancient one recently discovered. The result had been a rapid development of religious arrogance, intolerance, and fanaticism.

During the exile, lest they should forget and outgrow their peculiar institutions and gradually be absorbed by the surrounding population, some of the priests and prophets gathered them into congregations on the Sabbath, expounding to them the new ritual law and reading from the writings of the prophets, of which they then began to make a collection. Thus there grew up the synagogue, an entirely new institution, which those who returned from exile brought back with them.

It might have become the means of a complete emancipation from priestly control, since it made possible the culture of religion without a temple or priests or sacrifices, and since, while the law prescribed the ritual, the prophets often denounced it, saying, as Micah did, (vi, 6-8):

"Wherewith shall I come before Jahveh and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him

with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will Jahveh be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jahveh require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?"

The power of the priests was too strong, however, for any deliverance and, under their control and with the aid of the scribes, the synagogue had become a new instrument of oppression for the binding of heavy burdens upon men's shoulders, which, as Paul said afterwards, neither they nor their fathers had been able to bear, and which Jesus contrasted with his yoke of an awakened conscience and a new outlook upon life, saying that his yoke was easy and his burden was light.

It is no wonder that people were astonished at the teaching of Jesus, because it was so different from that of the scribes. There was no hair-splitting, no balancing of law against law, no quoting of authorities, no confusing of minds, no multiplying of burdens, but a direct appeal to the heart and conscience to take control of one's life and to fit oneself for citizenship in the coming Kingdom. He seemed to have authority, the authority of strong personal conviction, the authority of direct intuition, the authority of personal experience. And his word was with power. It carried conviction to men who had never realised their manhood, to men who had never been told and had not dared to think that they had a right to form or to hold any opinion of their own. This is a remarkable feature of the teaching of Jesus that is often overlooked, his belief in the inherent ability of men to respond to appeals to heart and conscience, to recognise the principles of right, and

to perceive some of the realities of spiritual things. Afterwards it came to be believed, under the leadership of Paul, that these things were prearranged and fore-ordained, but with Jesus it was not so. God and goodness were such absolute realities to him that it seemed to him that they must be as real to all men.

The words of Jesus on that first Sabbath in Capernaum created a profound impression upon those who heard them. We have no record of them, but may be sure of their general tenor from such of his sayings as did survive. Among those who heard them was a man suffering from nerve and brain trouble. According to the popular notions a devil had taken possession of him and was acting upon him from within, for such was the common interpretation of all diseases, and Jesus shared it with the majority of the people of his day. This man, being wrought up to a state of great excitement, suddenly cried out, or, as those present thought, the demons in him cried out, that Jesus was the Messiah and asked if he had come to destroy "us," that is, the demons.

It was part of the popular notions that the demons were possessed of supernatural knowledge and therefore that a crazy man would recognise the Messiah, when people still in their senses might not. It was also supposed to be the principal work of the Messiah to overcome the Devil and his demons. The incident fitted admirably into Mark's belief that Jesus was the Messiah, that he acted from the beginning in the full consciousness of being the Messiah, and that he proved it by the wonderful works which he did; also that the demons always recognised him and cried out in alarm at the presence of their prospective conqueror. We read that "Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy

peace and come out of him," and that "when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him." This incident is probably true history and things happened very much as narrated, but the interpretation put upon it was false pathology.

The progress of medical knowledge has rendered the supernatural theory of disease obsolete, but it has also served to explain many of the healings recorded in the story of Jesus as due to psychological and magnetic influences. In this case the man believed that there was a demon inside of him and, when he spoke, it was not in his own personality, but in that of the demon speaking through him. Jesus, believing as the man did, addressed the supposed demon, whereupon the man, believing that the great Messiah had commanded the demon to come out of him, underwent a sudden revulsion of mental conditions, which calmed him so completely that it seemed to all present that Jesus must have power over demons. Jesus was as surprised as any of those present to find himself possessed of this power and sought an explanation. It seemed to him strong evidence in confirmation of his belief that the Kingdom of God was near at hand, as in the spring-time the early flowers give promise of the coming summer (Lk. xi, 20), but there is no evidence that he therefore thought himself to be the Messiah.

His power over nervous and mental diseases was the power which inheres in a strong body, a clear intelligence, a sincere sympathy, an unsullied moral nature, and a profound consciousness of God over a weak body, a dull mind, a perverted moral nature, and a feeble will. It acts by suggestion, but depends for results upon the belief of the individual, as we read that he could not

accomplish cures in Nazareth on account of the unbelief of the people.

In attempting to establish the true story of Jesus, it is necessary to discriminate between the healing of diseases, which have their origin in the mind or nerves, and miracles, which, as suspensions or subversions of natural law, are no longer recognised as possible.

Mark, and after him Luke, state that Jesus rebuked the supposed demon for calling him the Messiah and bade him hold his peace. One would naturally say that he did this because he did not think of himself as the Messiah and did not wish such an impression to become established. Mark, however, uses this and other accounts of recognition by the demons as evidence of the Messiahship, and yet he is inconsistent, for he shows, in his account of the great event several months later, at Cæsarea Philippi, that not until that time did any of the disciples think of him as the Messiah.

The belief is represented at that time not only as entirely new, but as due to a direct revelation to Peter; whereas, if the disciples had known of the frequently reported recognition by the supposed demons, they would have become familiar with the thought and would have grown into the belief long before they did. We must conclude, therefore, that Mark's account of such experiences is, at least, somewhat overdone.

Mark mentions one Sabbath in the synagogue at Capernaum, while Luke suggests several. They are probably both right and Jesus continued his teaching for some time, while it was probably the experiences on the first Sabbath which created the great impression. It was no wonder that the people were astonished and called it a new doctrine, for Jesus had resorted to none of the incantations and magical formulas of the pro-

fessional exorcists, but the result had followed upon his simple command.

§ VII: *Mark i, 29-34; Luke iv, 38-41; Matt. viii 14-16*

This eventful day did not end with the scene in the synagogue, for it is related that on returning to Simon's house it was found that his wife's mother was ill of a fever, and that when Jesus took her by the hand the fever left her; furthermore, that after sunset there were brought to him sick and insane people and that he healed many of them.

There is no doubt that many healings took place, for it would be contrary to both history and science to doubt them, or many similar ones for many ages and in many lands. Among the thousands who undertook in ancient days the weary journey to the temple of Isis at Philæ, or to that of Æsculapius at Epidaurus, among those who sought the Pool of Bethesda, or who now throng about the Grotto at Lourdes, there always were and still are many cures. Among the ignorant and superstitious they were and still are held to be due to supernatural causes, whereas the patient investigations of science have shown them to be due to a crisis in the high tension of expectancy and belief which often results in a complete change in the system. The cures have been shown to average about ten per cent. of those seeking them and in all cases it was the intensity of the belief which wrought the cure. What the object of the belief was did not matter. The tomb of St. Rosalia at Palermo is a favourite miracle-working shrine, nor was its efficacy in any way lessened when it was discovered that it contained the bones of a goat.

In the city of Treves there is a relic known as the

“Holy Coat of Treves” and believed to be the coat worn by Jesus just before the crucifixion, and therefore imagined to possess extraordinary miracle-working power. It is said that in the year 1844 a million and a half pilgrims visited the shrine. In the year 1891 a commission of reputable German physicians was invited to attend and to give their verdict as to the cures. They testified as to eleven extraordinary cases for which they were unable to account. Among them was a case of the consumption of the optic nerve, one of lupus, another of the loss of the use of the legs and arms on account of rheumatism of the joints, a case of St. Vitus’ dance, the blindness of an eye and the lameness of an arm as a result of inflammation of the brain, a case of bone consumption of the spine, and another<sup>r</sup> of inflammation of the spinal marrow. When such cases are attested by physicians of repute in our own day, it is impossible to doubt the evidence. The misfortune is that the Church claims them to be miracles.

If in our own day a belief in the virtue of an old coat can produce such results, we have but to imagine ourselves in Palestine at the time of Jesus, among a population always on the verge of religious mania, to realise that with those who recognised him as a prophet gifted with superhuman power, or possibly as the great Messiah himself, there was virtually no limit to what might happen in the way of cure as the result of suggestion, expectation, and belief.

§ VIII: *Mark i, 35-39; Luke iv, 42-44*

The unbounded sympathy which Jesus had with human misery and suffering made him willing to use his extraordinary power in healing many diseases, and



yet he recognised that this was an interference with what he believed to be his legitimate work. The crowds, too, might easily attract the attention of Herod Antipas, so that the fate of John the Baptist might overwhelm him before he had accomplished what he hoped to do. After one of the exciting days in Capernaum he escaped in the night and went out alone into the desolate country. Men said afterwards that it was to pray, which is undoubtedly true, for those who knew him best knew that he prayed much. God was very real to his mind and he believed that God had commissioned him to proclaim the good news of the coming of the Kingdom. He naturally turned to him for a frequent renewal of his strength and courage, for the replenishing of his spiritual battery with new divine power, but it was always with him real prayer, not prayers, the opening of his soul to the divine life and not the repetition of fixed formulas.

In the morning Simon and others found him and hoped to win him back to Capernaum, because the crowd would see more of him; but he told them that he had come out in order to go upon a preaching tour in the neighbouring towns.

§ IX: *Mark i, 40-45; Luke v, 12-16; Matt. viii, 1-4*

It was during the preaching tour among the villages along the north-western shore of the Lake of Galilee that Jesus came upon the leper whose disobedience afterwards caused him so much trouble. According to the account, the leper begged to be healed and "Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him, and said unto him, I will; be thou clean." It is very difficult for us to believe in the possibility of an

immediate and complete cure of leprosy, and yet it is no more astonishing than the cases authenticated in the account from Treves, while the cures of scrofula by the king's touch in England, through all the generations from the days of Edward the Confessor until after the times of William the Third, and attested in many instances by the ablest physicians of the age, make us hesitate to affirm that anything is impossible to the power of expectation and belief, especially when under the influence of a great love and a strong will.

The leper was told to get a certificate of health restoring him to society, as required by the law (Lev. xiv), but not to tell how he had been healed. Jesus was not claiming to be the Messiah, nor working cures to prove that he was the Messiah, but he had learned already that it was necessary to avoid notoriety as much as possible. As the man did not heed him, but published the fact of his cure, Jesus found it necessary to avoid Capernaum for a while and even to keep away from the smaller towns, but his reputation was already established, and crowds began to gather about him wherever he went.

§ X: *Mark ii, 1-12; Luke v, 17-26; Matt. ix, 1-8*

There is no further account of the first preaching tour of Jesus. The tradition was already lost, except that probably some of the things which he said survived in the collection of "Sayings," without reference to time or place.

Mark hurries on to narrate the beginning of conflict, which naturally left a strong impression.

After an absence of "some days," more probably several weeks, Jesus thought that he might venture

to return to Capernaum, but the news of his coming at once brought together the crowd, so that the house was filled to overflowing and Jesus preached to them.

Mark says that there were some scribes among the people present. This was afterwards enlarged by Luke into the statement that they together with some Pharisees had come from every town of Galilee and Judæa and Jerusalem, which is altogether improbable; for the reputation of Jesus could hardly have extended to Jerusalem at that time, nor could there have been quite so early an organised attempt to investigate the new movement. The scribes who were present came out of curiosity. They were a class of men which had grown up since the return of the Jews from Babylon as the students and authoritative teachers of the law. Those who came back from Babylon were fanatical devotees of the law as it was set forth in the Book of Deuteronomy. Soon after their return it was made much more elaborate and explicit mainly in the new Book of Leviticus and, from that time, for four hundred years, they had been adding applications, decisions, and details, known collectively as the "traditions of the elders" and held to be of equal authority with the law.

We read that, in the midst of his impassioned, enthusiastic, impressive talk, there was a sudden interruption. Four men had brought a palsied man to be healed and, as they could not get through the crowd, had let him down through the roof. Jesus realised the situation at a glance, the helplessness of the man, with the strong expectancy and belief both of himself and of those who brought him. He seems to have stopped in his talk long enough to say, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," and then to have gone on talking. Soon, however,

he became conscious of unrest, of signs of disapproval, with frowns on some faces, the shaking of heads, low murmurs of conversation. It was evident what was passing in many minds.

He had presumed to declare that the man's sins were forgiven, but God alone, these men held, could forgive sins and only in the way provided in the law. Was it not divinely revealed in the fourth, fifth, and sixteenth chapters of the Book of Leviticus just how sins could be forgiven, what sacrifices were necessary, and how they were to be offered? Did not forgiveness have to be paid for, and was not blood the only coin which passed current at the divine court? How did a man dare to talk about forgiveness, when none of the conditions had been complied with? What would become of the temple and the priesthood if such teaching should prevail, and would not religion be destroyed if any one might say to another, "Thy sins be forgiven thee"? Surely this was heresy. These men had been terribly shocked, but Jesus saw at once what was passing in their minds. He stopped again and asked them a question: "Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?"

His question indicates certain beliefs, which were most extraordinary and entirely new; for, in the first place, he seems to have recognised an intimate connection in some cases between moral and physical evil, which no one heeded at the time, and which only after the lapse of eighteen centuries is beginning to seriously engage the attention of intelligent men, who recognise that the passions of the mind have their reactions in lesions and weaknesses of the body. Many a great truth was with Jesus the result of clear and direct

intuition and not of the slow and patient process of reasoning. But, along with this, there went another belief. Forgiveness could not be the result of a judicial process, which measured the transgression, assigned the penalty, and accepted a substitution, a payment, or a compromise; but, quite the contrary, for, since sin was an enslavement of body and mind, forgiveness must be the emancipation of both body and mind from the power of evil habit, passion, and desire, not the remission of penalty, but the deliverance from bonds. The new desire for purity, fidelity, and graciousness of life set free the soul and with it there would follow in time the reconstruction of the body. Any man, seeing the evidence of a moral change in a fellow-man, could encourage him with the welcome words, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Such was the belief of Jesus. He did not see all the logical consequences of it, for it was entirely subversive of the Jewish religion and of all other religions which make forgiveness a legal transaction and part of a system. It was no wonder that those who saw some of its bearings were shocked and scandalised. But Jesus said to them: "That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed and go thy way into thine house." And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all. Jesus had demonstrated the truth of his teaching and the fact of his power. There need be no doubt but that the cure really took place. Out of thirty-eight cases of cures attested by German physicians at Treves, in the year 1891, one third were cures of lameness.

The expression "Son of Man" has given rise to much misunderstanding and controversy. Jesus spoke Ara-

maic, in which the word for "man" is a compound word and means literally "son of man." There never would have been any misunderstanding but for its use in the Book of Daniel and the interpretation which had been put upon it as there used. The supposed Daniel did not mention a Messiah, but made a man the symbol of the expected Jewish empire, as the beasts had been symbols of the preceding empires. The popular mind misunderstood the symbolism and, in the time of Jesus, many people in Palestine really imagined that the "Son of Man" of the Book of Daniel referred to a personal Messiah.

The whole controversy is, therefore, as to whether Jesus so meant it, or whether in speaking the language of the people who heard him, he used the only available expression for "man." We must adopt the latter alternative, for he certainly was not claiming to be the Messiah, nor to use the prerogative of the Messiah in declaring the forgiveness of sins. No one in that crowd would have doubted for a moment that the Messiah could exercise judicial rights and forgive sins. What surprised and shocked them was that a man should assume to exercise such rights, and that neither they nor any of the Christians afterwards put any other construction upon the event is evident from Matthew's Gospel, in which it is said that "they marvelled and glorified God, who had given such power unto *men*."

§ XI: *Mark. ii, 13-17; Luke v, 27-32; Matt. ix, 9-13*

We are not to think of the events narrated by Mark as given in the order in which they occurred, but that he took isolated accounts which passed current in tradition and arranged them as best he could. Luke and

Matthew, who followed his general outline, allowed themselves entire liberty in changing the order whenever it seemed to them that some account belonged or would be more effective in some other connection. During the early days in Galilee, among the multitude which gathered upon the shore of the lake, Jesus felt himself attracted to a man in the crowd and asked him to join the company of his special friends. The man's name was Levi, but, in accordance with a custom which had become quite common, he had adopted the Greek name "Matthew," as his occupation brought him much into contact with foreigners. He was a collector of customs for Herod Antipas. This made him a man thoroughly hated and despised by the Jews, who classified all collectors of taxes or customs with harlots, claiming that all taxes were payable to God only through the priests at the temple. Along with this theological odium there went the belief, no doubt often well grounded, that these men enriched themselves by dishonesty. Jesus, in the exercise of his grand consciousness of freedom, looked upon men as men, without reference to the categories in which their fellow-men placed them, or the epithets which they bestowed upon them.

This man was certainly very much impressed by Jesus and greatly pleased to be asked to become one of his companions. He gave a supper and naturally invited his friends in the custom house, together with Jesus and his disciples. This was a new shock to the scribes and Pharisees, for there were few things more dreadful to their minds than to eat at the same table with people less pious than they thought themselves. They had the sanction of Scripture, too, for their objection, for they read in the first Psalm, "Blessed is the

man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly nor stood in the way of sinners, and hath not sat in the seat of the scornful." They ventured to ask the disciples how it was that their Master would so forget all propriety and respectability as to eat and drink at the same table with such wicked people. The disciples could not tell. They already loved their Master and did what they saw him do, without stopping to think what people would say, but Jesus answered the question with sarcasm, saying, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." If these men were as bad as the Pharisees held them to be they certainly needed some one to help them.

This was the grand attitude of Jesus towards humanity. In the greatness of his heart he felt drawn towards the men who were despised and neglected and who had therefore lost heart and courage. There was good news for these men. The great Kingdom of God was coming and with it a glorious relief for those who were tired and discouraged. Many of them would surely welcome the good news and be glad to fit themselves for citizenship. He felt it his mission to call sinners, to call them to the Kingdom of God, not, as the Christians said afterwards, misunderstanding him, to call them "to repentance." These words were an addition, for Jesus did not go to the despised, neglected, down-trodden, and forlorn with the terrors of judgment, but with the good news of the coming joy.

§ XII: *Mark ii, 18-22; Luke v, 33-39; Matt. ix, 14-17*

One of the remarkable features of the life of Jesus was his entire naturalness and his freedom from all the conventionalities of Judaism. Fasting had not origi-



nally been a Jewish custom. After the return from exile it had been appointed once a year, on the Day of Atonement, and special fasts were ordered when the Fall rains were late, upon the general theory that the discomfort of the nation put a pressure upon God which compelled him to send the rain.

In addition to this, the Pharisees had fallen into the habit of voluntary fasting, as the means of obtaining renown among men and favour from God. John the Baptist, too, had been an exponent of asceticism and had laid upon his followers rules for fasting. Representatives of both these classes were shocked that the new Master did not establish rules for fasting among his disciples. They came and asked Jesus why it was so, which gave him an opportunity for declaring one of his broad general principles. Fasting could not be an enforced, artificial, arbitrary thing, a matter of rules. It was the natural expression and concomitant of grief and distress. Any other fasting than this natural kind, when the heart was so full that one could not eat, was an artificial thing and utter foolishness. Jesus and his disciples were living in the glad expectation of the immediate coming of the Kingdom of God. They were full of joy, like the friends of the bridegroom at a wedding, and fasting would be out of keeping with their mood. There is no allegory in these words. He did not refer to himself as "the bridegroom," nor imply thereby that he knew himself to be the Messiah. It is not possible that he added the words about the bridegroom's being taken away, after which his disciples would fast; for, not only was he not referring to himself as the bridegroom, but he did not expect to be taken away. On the contrary, he expected to enter with his friends into the joy and glory of the Kingdom so

soon to come. In later days the Christians adopted the custom of fasting from John's disciples and from Pharisaic precedent and then imagined that Jesus had predicted his death and had sanctioned the custom of fasting after that should occur. We must conclude that these words are an interpolation to establish the sanction of his supposed authority for the later custom.

Mark thought that this was a convenient place for introducing two of the great sayings of Jesus, which will stand for ever as evidences of his clear intuition and as the Magna Charta of all righteous souls which are struggling to emancipate their fellow-men from the slavery of conventionality and tradition. You cannot adjust the broader principles of a larger life to the notions and customs of a worn-out system, you cannot force the ferment of a new enthusiasm back within the fetters of an old routine. There can be no patching of the new upon the old, no cramping of the new within the old. The Kingdom of God is coming, it is all in the future. The old beliefs and methods did not bring it. They are not to be restored but outgrown.

All this and much more is contained in these wonderful words of Jesus, but it is hardly possible that he realised the full import of what he said, for he does not seem to have thought at that time that the Jewish religion was wholly inadequate for human needs and that its days were virtually over. It seemed to him, the rather, that he was bringing it back to its purity and strength before the accumulation of the "traditions of the elders" had made of it a burden and a blight. These words were, therefore, the result of a clear intuition, a flash of religious genius, which becomes a revelation to men whose duller perceptions would not have enabled them to see the truth. How dull the average

mind is and how impervious to spiritual truth and to all general principles and broad generalisations is illustrated by the addition of the thirty-ninth verse to the fifth chapter of Luke's Gospel.

Some copyist in one of the early centuries imagined that Jesus was recommending new wine, and wrote his comment on the margin to the effect that no man of any discrimination would drink new wine when he could get old wine: "for he saith, The old is better." Some copyist after him copied his marginal note into the text and so it has come down as part of the authorised text, but it is lacking in many manuscripts and should be omitted.

§ XIII: *Mark ii, 23-28; Luke vi, 1-5; Matt. xii, 1-8*

The clear perceptions of Jesus as to right and wrong, apart from all the fictions of conventionality, brought him inevitably into conflict with the exponents of legal and mechanical religion. It is related that on one occasion when passing with his disciples through a wheat-field, the latter, being hungry, plucked some of the ears of wheat and ate them. This had been especially allowed by the law, as set forth in the Book of Deuteronomy (xxiii, 25) and adopted in the time of Josiah. In later centuries the multiplied traditions of the elders concerning the Sabbath included it among the things forbidden on that day. A complete history of the Jewish Sabbath would be very interesting reading, but it would be impossible now to supply details from its earliest days. As it has to do with rest from ordinary labour, it could have grown up only in a settled agricultural community. The ancestors of Jews and Israelites, so long as they were nomads of the

desert, had no occasion for it and knew nothing of it. As they settled in the land of Canaan and gradually adopted the ways of the higher civilisation they fell naturally into the observance of its established festivals. Among these was the Sabbath, which seems to have originated in Babylon, or Chaldea, in very ancient times, as an unlucky day; later it became confused with astrological notions and assigned to the god afterwards imagined to correspond with Saturn; and still later it became mixed up with moon worship. At any rate, there was a Canaanitish festival on the days of the new moon and full moon and the days half-way between the two. These weekly festivals the Israelites took over from the Canaanites, with the cessation of labour and consequent opportunities of feasting and joy. In course of time priests and prophets had gradually made the observance of the day into a distinctive feature of Jewish life and, during the exile, the zealous, enthusiastic, and fanatical people recognised it as a means for keeping up the distinctiveness and separateness of the Jews from other people and therefore multiplied the rules for its observance. On their return from exile these rules were incorporated in the newly codified law, under the pretence that they had existed from the earliest days, and are to be found in Exodus xvi, 23-30; xxi, 12-17, xxxv, 1-3; and in Numbers xv, 32-36. They even went so far as to invent a reason for the observance by materialising an Oriental myth of creation (Gen. i, 1-11, 4a) in which they taught that Jahveh himself observed the Sabbath by resting on that day from the work of making the world. After the exile the hardening and narrowing process had gone on until by the time of Jesus the scribes were able to specify thirty-nine kinds of labour

which might not be performed on the Sabbath, of which reaping was one, and these, together with the enormous mass of opinions and special applications, had transformed the original institution of a day of rest and happiness into an intolerable burden for the people who simply could not keep it entirely, while those who were learned in the law were able to evade its provisions by a judicious application of the tricks of casuistry. The healthy moral consciousness of Jesus revolted against this colossal absurdity. He saw that the human perceptions of right and wrong had no chance to act when all life was reduced to the keeping of rules and that men were deprived of all moral incentive and the exercise of all moral judgment when bound in slavery to a legal system. We have an indication of the wonderful influence of his presence and spirit over the men who knew him best. He had not taught them to disregard the law of the Sabbath, but their manhood had grown by association with him, so that they naturally plucked the wheat and ate it, without thinking that they were breaking the law and that the penalty would have been death, if the Roman government had not mercifully curtailed some of the religious privileges of the Jews.

When Jesus was appealed to on account of this flagrant disregard for law, he referred his questioners to a precedent recorded in their Scriptures (1 Sam. xxi) relating that David and his friends had eaten the sacrificial bread from the temple at Nob, because they were hungry and could get no other food. The argument was perfectly evident. Human need took precedence of rules. This was astonishing teaching for Pharisees to hear and Jesus enforced it with another of his grand principles, "The Sabbath was made for

man and not man for the Sabbath." It was an institution admirably adapted to man's rest and comfort and happiness, but the Pharisees, by their multiplied rules, had virtually reduced men to slavery under it. They must escape from this slavery and assert their manhood. Using their intelligence, their judgment, their moral consciousness, they must determine how they would get the greatest good out of an institution which he declared was made for them, for, he said, "The son of man is lord also of the Sabbath."

This is the expression "Son of Man" again. It means "man," as already explained, and nothing more. Otherwise we lose the whole force of the teaching of Jesus on this subject. The Sabbath was made for man, therefore man was lord of the Sabbath and, instead of obeying rules, must use his best judgment. If Jesus had been claiming to be the Messiah and as such to legislate and, as it were, to use his prerogative to supersede the law by granting an indulgence to the disciples, no one would have doubted that the Messiah had this right, but Jesus was not claiming to be the Messiah, nor would the Pharisees, with whom he was talking, have recognised any such claim.

On the contrary, he was laying down a principle always and everywhere applicable, that man in the exercise of his moral judgment is superior to any of the rules of human conventionality and lord of the situation. This was too large a truth for any of the people of that day to appreciate or understand and the early Christians did not understand it. They thought, as they considered this traditional conversation, that Jesus had been simply exercising the right of the Messiah to change established legislation. So strongly were they convinced of this that the later Gospels of Luke

and Matthew suppressed his great words, "The Sabbath was made for man," etc., and left the impression that, as David had persuaded the priest to give him the consecrated bread, so David's great successor had permitted the disciples to pluck wheat on the Sabbath. Matthew goes even further and constructs an argument which he puts into the mouth of Jesus, that, as the priests in the temple are blameless, although, in the discharge of their duties, they break the law, so he, the Messiah, who is greater than the temple, has a right to alter or suspend the law.

Thus, by the persistence of the leaven of the Pharisees, the teaching of Jesus was obscured and lost, but, thanks to the intelligent method of the "Higher Criticism," we can now get back of the misinterpretations of the early days and, coming nearer to the real Jesus, rescue many of the clear perceptions and great principles which made his life the supreme power for the moral and spiritual evolution of mankind.

§ XIV: *Mark iii, 1-6; Luke vi, 6-11; Matt. xii, 9-14*

The extraordinary courage of Jesus has never been realised, the courage to act in accordance with his conscience and judgment and under the impulses of his heart, regardless of all the laws, rules, conventionalities, and customs of his environment.

We sometimes, in our own day, admire the courage of a man who in obeying his conscience defies public opinion, but in Jesus' time public opinion was crystallised into a legal code believed to be of divine origin, many deviations from which were punishable by death.

He had already aroused great hostility by his declaration concerning the Sabbath, because, if its observance

were to be left to each man's judgment, the law was virtually abrogated. He determined not to wait for another attack, but to turn upon his enemies. In the synagogue, very likely upon the same Sabbath, was a man with a withered hand. The Gospel of the Hebrews says that he was a stone-mason, and that he had asked Jesus to heal him in order that he might support his family. However that may be, the Pharisees, as soon as they discovered the man, immediately wondered whether Jesus would dare to apply the principle which he had so recently declared, by healing him on the Sabbath. The law did not allow anything whatsoever to be done for a sick man on the Sabbath, unless it was certain that without help he would lose his life before sunset.

Jesus saw what was passing in their minds and, bidding the man stand forth, asked them a straight question: "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day, or to do evil; to save life, or to kill?" They could not answer, because the law taught that it was not lawful to do anything, either good or bad, on the Sabbath, and yet they did not like to put themselves on record before the people by declaring that the law forbade doing good. Jesus was angry with them, because they had let their intelligence and conscience become so deadened by devotion to the law that they could not tell right from wrong, and he grieved for the common people on account of their stolid docility which yielded blindly to Pharisaic control.

He bade the man stretch forth his hand and it was healed. He had openly broken the law and the Pharisees were both angry and alarmed. If things were to go on in this way, if the people were to be taught that the law might thus be lightly set aside, they would lose



their reputation for sanctity and their power of control over the masses. Something must be done and done quickly to stop the work of Jesus.

The earliest tradition said that they tried to arrange with some of the officers of Herod Antipas, which is quite probable. The only reason which they could urge would be political, that Jesus was exciting the masses and might create a revolt. The most that they could hope for would be his arrest and imprisonment, for there was no ground on which Herod could put him to death. That they had some success is evident from the fact that Jesus increased his caution, avoiding the larger places and sometimes leaving the dominion of Herod altogether.

§ XV: *Mark iii, 7-12; Luke vi, 17-19; Matt. xii, 15-21*

Jesus withdrew again from public places and sought with his disciples the solitude along the shore of the lake. The first time it had been in order to escape from the crowd attracted by his healings. This time it was to avoid the rising tide of hostility. That truth should ever arouse hostility and that the great helpers of mankind should in all lands and in all ages have been denounced and persecuted is one of the strange phenomena of history, and yet its causes are not hard to find. Real religion is undoubtedly a faith which works by love and purifies the heart, developing a spontaneity of goodness. There has always been some of it, wherever individuals have reached a certain degree of intelligence and moral power, and it has increased in volume with the passing of the centuries, but it has necessarily been confined to the minority and could never become the established and official religion.

The latter, being an adjustment to the lesser capacities of the multitude, has been assumed to be the real thing and to rest upon divine authority. When a people is satisfied with its substitute for religion, whether it be a sacrificial system, a complicated legalism, or an elaborated dogmatism, it will fight to the bitter end against any one who throws discredit upon it by suggesting something better, and there are always two classes to do the fighting, the leaders and the led. The former fight for the preservation of their prestige and power, while the latter resist the necessity of thinking and the readjustment of their mental machinery concerning questions which they thought were settled forever. We who have seen the hostility of the devotees of official and established religion against every ray of light thrown upon the problems of life during the whole course of the nineteenth century shall hardly wonder at the hostility of scribes and Pharisees to Jesus more than eighteen centuries ago. They were not bad men and, although their system offered large possibilities for hypocrisy, most of them were honest in their convictions and conscientious in their actions, but they illustrated the saying that it is a dangerous thing for ignorant men to be too conscientious.

They were sure that their system was the only true and possible religion and that it was their duty to get Jesus out of the way in order to save Judaism. Jesus bowed, however, at this time before the growing storm, but was unable to escape from the crowd, which followed him from various motives, some to listen to his wonderful words, others for the sake of excitement, and many to be healed.

It is probably true that the throng became intolerable, so that he was obliged to escape by boat, but we

are not told where he went. It is not probable, however, that at this time people came from Judæa and Jerusalem or from Tyre and Sidon. The fact of the crowd had left a great impression, but the account had grown by repetition. It looks as if the original Gospel had not included people from this wider area, but that the eighth verse of the third chapter of Mark's Gospel was a later interpolation to bring it up to the statement in Luke's Gospel. By the time that Matthew's Gospel was written the Christians had come to believe that everything which occurred in the life of Jesus was in fulfilment of some ancient prophecy, so that neither he nor the multitude acted of their own volition, but under the influence of divine power acting upon them from without, in order that Scripture might be fulfilled. They found a passage in the writings of the unknown prophet of Babylon, called "the second Isaiah," which they supposed referred to a Messiah and thought applicable to Jesus; but they were most unfortunate in their interpretation of Scripture, for the passage which they quoted had reference only to the pious individuals among the exiled population, called collectively by the prophet "the Servant of Jahveh," and to the astonishing results which he thought would accrue from their fidelity, in the conversion of the nations to Judaism. The passage contained no suggestion of a Messiah.

§ XVI: *Mark iii, 13-19; Luke vi, 12-16; Matt. x, 1-4*

Jesus was apparently often much distressed in the early days of his ministry at being diverted from what he felt to be his legitimate work of proclaiming the speedy coming of the Kingdom of God, by devoting

so much time to the healing of diseases. His great heart would not let him refuse to use his power for the relief of men's bodies, and yet the burden which weighed upon him was the healing of their souls, by arousing them to a complete moral equipment for citizenship in the coming Kingdom. It was discouraging, too, to see the crowd come and go and apparently carry away nothing for the enlargement of their ideals or the moral enrichment of their lives.

Thus the beginning of a sad disillusionment was added to the grief caused by the rising tide of official hostility. Under these circumstances one needs sympathy, an intimate circle of friends to understand one better than is possible with the crowd, to enter into one's faith and hope, to share one's ideals, and to help to bear the burden of perplexity, anxiety, and care. Feeling his growing isolation and the need of sympathy and love, Jesus asked some of the men, who had been most constant in their attendance, to be his permanent companions, thinking that, together with their sympathy, he might eventually have their help in spreading over a wider area the good news of the Kingdom of God.

Later tradition was agreed that there were twelve of these men and they were often spoken of as "the twelve," but there was some doubt as to one of the names, for, in place of Thaddeus, as given by Mark and Matthew, Luke, both in his Gospel and in the Book of the Acts, gives Judas, the son of James.

The translation in the authorised English version of Mark's Gospel (iii, 14), "And he ordained twelve," is misleading, conveying the impression that these men were given official positions in an organisation. The word translated "ordained" admits of no such render-

ing and has been corrected to "appointed" in the new version. Luke wrote, in his Gospel, "and of them he chose twelve." There was no thought of any organization. Jesus needed the sympathy of intimate friends and from a large company selected for more intimate companionship such as seemed most promising. The traditional and popular notion that he intended to make these men the nucleus of a future congregation or Church is entirely misleading.

§ XVII: *Mark iii, 20-30; Luke xi, 14-23; Matt xii, 22-32*

§ XVIII: *Mark iii, 31-35; Luke viii, 19-21; Matt. xii. 46-50*

The excitement caused by the work and preaching of Jesus grew so rapidly that it was soon impossible for him to avoid the crowd and that wherever he was, whether in a town, on the mountain side, or by the shore of the lake, a great multitude soon gathered. But the crowd was not all of one mind. Opinions were divided, for the Pharisees had begun to work among the people, teaching them that he was a dangerous man and the enemy of religion, while others held that he was not intentionally wicked, but virtually insane. This opinion seems to have been shared by the members of his own family who, we are told, came from Nazareth to take him by force and put him under restraint, but could not get near him on account of the density of the crowd.

The Pharisees, who had not succeeded with the officers of Herod Antipas in causing his arrest, seem to have sent to Jerusalem for some scribes high in author-

ity to come and refute his teaching and to overawe the multitude by the prestige of their reputation and power.

Mark does not indicate what opened the controversy but Luke and Matthew find a tradition that it came to an issue by the healing of a man who was blind and dumb. Naturally the people were amazed, so that some of them began to say that this must really be the Messiah. To counteract this, the scribes from Jerusalem said: "No, he has simply made a league with the Devil and by his help he casts out demons."

There was no belief which seemed more absolutely real to the majority of the people of Palestine at that day than the belief in a personal Devil, a bad god, only slightly inferior in power to the good God, and in immediate control of all things in this world, causing through his demons all the calamities and diseases which afflicted mankind. The belief had come from Persia, where it constituted an essential part of the Zoroastrian religion. It had come into Palestine along with the Persian dominion and had become so entirely rooted in the thought of the majority that it seemed to be a revelation of the actual constitution of the universe.

It is certainly a more intelligent belief than the later Christian notion that God is the direct cause of all calamities, which is still set forth on every bill of lading in the Christian world; for therein a transportation company is declared to be not responsible for "acts of God," by which are meant such things as tornadoes, earthquakes, strokes of lightning, etc., while in many of the churches it is declared in a prayer "For a person under affliction" that God has "seen fit to visit him with trouble and to bring distress upon him."

It would be better to keep a personal Devil, in order

that we might have a God who is worthy of love and a source of strength and comfort, until we are intelligent enough to know that all calamities are the result of the operation of natural law with which God does not interfere, and that as a result of his non-interference we are saved from perpetual intellectual confusion. It seems to have been a common belief that one might enter into league with the Devil. We know how large a rôle the belief played in Europe during the Middle Ages that one could sell himself to the Devil in the next world in return for his service in this world and how the belief has been immortalised in Goethe's *Faust*. This was the charge which the scribes from Jerusalem now brought against Jesus as a means of counteracting his growing influence. Jesus, however, discovering what they were saying among the people, refuted them on two grounds. The Devil could not work against himself without eventually wrecking his own kingdom. So this charge was absurd. But, suppose it were true, would these men be consistent and sustain the same charge against some of their own sons, who were in the habit of practising exorcism?

Jesus, having refuted them, turned upon them with indignation and wrath. They were guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, a sin which would never be forgiven. If, as he had shown them, the Devil had not helped him, then it must be that God was working through him and these results of the divine power before their very eyes were evidences that the Kingdom of God was close at hand.

This was the interpretation which he put upon his extraordinary power. As the first leaves of Spring are evidences of the coming of Summer, so were these manifestations of power over demons harbingers of the

coming victory of God over the whole power of the Devil in this world. To deny the evidence was to blaspheme the very spirit of God, to whose operation the casting out of devils was due. To let prejudice harden one's heart against such light would naturally exclude one from citizenship in the coming Kingdom and was therefore a sin which would not be forgiven. It should not disturb us that Jesus shared the popular belief of his day in a personal Devil and in demoniac agency in the causing of disease, nor is his belief on these matters to be taken as evidence that it is true. He was not a critic of popular beliefs, but of the immoralities and hypocrisies of life, while fitness for the Kingdom of God was with him always a moral quality and never an intellectual attitude. There was, too, in his attack upon the Pharisees a very necessary warning of the danger of prejudice; for, if prejudice be allowed to shut out the light of a larger truth it so benumbs the power of perception and so warps the judgment as to make any future escape and progress more difficult, if not impossible.

While this new controversy had been going on, the mother and brothers of Jesus had been trying to force their way to him through the crowd, but had not succeeded. They had become wrought up against him and had come to take him away. So long as they had heard of his success as a teacher and healer they had undoubtedly been pleased; but, when reports began to reach Nazareth that he was openly breaking the law and that the Pharisees had denounced him as an enemy of religion, they were terrified and had probably suffered from the slurs of their neighbours. They had decided that he was insane and that there was nothing to do but to bring him home and keep him



under restraint. Verse 21 connects with verse 31. Mark broke the connection to insert the argument about Beelzebub, because the family of Jesus agreed with the Pharisees in this matter. Jesus was told that they were there, but, instead of sending for them to come to him, he asked, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" Then, looking upon the twelve he said, "These are my mother and my brethren! For whosoever will do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother." It is quite possible that the answer discloses a long experience of previous suffering in his own home, a long acquaintance with heartache from the dulness and cruelty of his own family. At any rate it records his final break with them.

This account in the earliest Gospel is a complete refutation of the stories which grew up later of miraculous events in connection with the birth of Jesus, and make it evident that, when Mark wrote, those stories were unknown among the Christians. When the later Gospels of Luke and Matthew were written, or, at least, when the stories of a miraculous birth were prefixed to them, the reason for the coming of the mother and brothers of Jesus, as given by Mark (iii, 21), was suppressed, at the cost of making his answer seem harsh and cruel, for it was realised that the mother of a miraculous child, whose birth had been accompanied by such extraordinary phenomena as were related, would not afterwards have thought her son to be insane, but would have known from the first that he was the Messiah. Thus true history refutes the later legends.

By the time the fourth Gospel was written, history was so entirely ignored that Jesus was represented

as living happily with his mother and his brothers in Capernaum. (John ii, 12.)

§ XIX: *Mark iv, 1-9; Luke viii, 4-8; Matt. xiii, 1-9*

Apparently, soon after the final break with his family Jesus began to teach the truths which he had at heart by means of illustrations from the ordinary processes of nature, or the ordinary occupations of life, which seemed to him to furnish abundant analogies of spiritual things. He taught much in parables, which are never allegories with hidden and mysterious meanings, but illustrations with a single and direct application. The people were excessively dull and often failed to see the point, but Jesus relieved himself from discouragement by hoping and believing that some were not quite so dull, and to these he often appealed with the words, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." His chosen friends were also very dull, so that it was frequently necessary to explain a parable to them.

From this unfortunate necessity certain very mischievous conclusions were afterwards drawn. As the disciples enjoyed exceptional opportunities for having things explained to them, the belief grew up later that the teaching of Jesus was really an esoteric religion to be disclosed only to the initiated. This was followed by the notion that these fortunate ones had acquired their privileges as the result of divine foreordination. Finally it was held that Jesus had taught in parables for the purpose of obscuring the truth and in order that certain men might not understand.

The parables grew out of his experience and are often disclosures of the way in which he explained it to himself. The parable of the sower brings us very

near to him in sympathy and shows us his struggle to keep his faith bright and strong in face of the beginning of disillusionment.

When he began to preach that the Kingdom of God was coming and coming soon, very soon, it seemed to him that all who heard his message would at once reform and reconstruct their lives, so as to be found worthy of citizenship when God should appear in the clouds to open the judgment and to examine men as to their fitness for life in the Kingdom, but no such results had followed. Some were entirely unmoved and others only temporarily excited. Some displayed a shortlived zeal, while only here and there an individual took his message to heart and showed results in a transformed life. This was certainly not what he had expected. In time he found an explanation for it and the parable of the sower is as if we heard him thinking aloud. It seemed to him that he was like a man sowing seed, while the people were like the familiar soil of Palestine, hard-trodden, or shallow, or preoccupied, with only here and there fertile spots. He had been expecting too much. He must take men as he found them and be glad of the fertile spots where the seed could take root and grow. He is not blaming men, least of all does he blame God for human conditions, but merely adjusting his outlook to his experience and taking his friends into his confidence. The spiritual sowing finds its analogy in human husbandry and there will be a harvest by and by. Ever thereafter he seems frequently to have encouraged himself in the midst of depression and to have strengthened his faith in himself and in his mission by saying to himself, "The seed is good." In giving this parable he is consistent with his new interpretation, for, knowing that all who

listened would not understand, he appealed to those who had ears to hear.

§ XX; *Mark iv, 10-20; Luke viii, 9-15; Matt. xiii, 10-23*

It is undoubtedly true that the disciples needed to have this and other parables explained to them, but the explanation is certainly not that which Mark gives, for it loses the simplicity and naturalness of the parable by converting it into an allegory and making it the medium of hidden truth. By the time he wrote the belief had grown up among the Christians that the parables were not illustrations of truth, but mystifications to be understood only by the initiated.

Mark wrote (iv, 12): "That seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them."

Mark had been a companion of Paul and had undoubtedly read in his Epistle to the Romans (xi, 8): "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, unto this day."

Paul, in shaking off the burden of the Jewish law, had retained all the old rabbinical beliefs and had not progressed from the view of Isaiah eight centuries earlier, "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat and make their eyes heavy and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed" (Isaiah vi, 9, 10).

It is evident that the explanation which the Gospels give of why Jesus taught in parables did not come from

him, but is due to the persistence of the spirit and beliefs of Judaism.

Jesus never said nor thought that people were dull, or shallow, or preoccupied because God had made them so in order that they might not be helped, but was merely stating facts as he found them to account for the small results of his work. The shocking theory which the Gospels give is due to the spirit of theological arrogance, in conjunction with the belief in fatalism, and ought to be omitted wherever the Gospel is read, while the lengthy allegorical interpretation represents the belief of early Christians and not the teaching of Jesus.

§ XXI: *Mark iv, 21-25; Luke viii, 16-18*

Jesus seems to have followed up his talk with the disciples about the parable of the sower with some private instruction, which left so strong an impression that it was transmitted intact. In it he contradicts the conclusion which the Christians afterwards drew concerning the nature and purpose of parables. There is to be no esoteric teaching. There are to be no mysteries to be kept hidden and enjoyed in secret. Whatever they learned, they were to teach; whatever they heard, they were to proclaim; for they were like candles, the purpose of which is to give light, not to have the light obscured. But this very privilege of giving light brought with it a new responsibility. They must take heed what they heard, not listening to everything indiscriminately, but learning to judge between truth and falsehood, between what was helpful and what was injurious. Jesus had such clear intuitions of moral and spiritual truth that he believed that the same power

was inherent in every one in a minor degree, needing only to be cultivated.

It was a magnificent interpretation of human nature, contrary to popular opinion in his day and obscured by theological fictions ever since, but Jesus explained that, if they would use such power of discrimination as they had, the power would grow by use; while, if they neglected to use their faculties, they would lose the use of them. Modern science has established the truth perceived by him so long ago and now teaches that "use or lose" is an absolute law applicable to every faculty of the body and the mind.

The whole of his teaching, as contained in these few words, was wonderful. Man was not the subject of fate or decrees. He was capable of perceiving the highest truths and attaining the most exalted virtues. Let him take control of himself, not submitting to some external authority, listening heedlessly to traditions or falling into the rut of custom, but using his faculties, and he would grow.

This was religion as Jesus understood it, every man becoming a battery of moral and spiritual force, illuminating the world by teaching and living the truth. The Gospels show how completely he has been misunderstood and how diametrically he was opposed to the fatalistic interpretation of life which is inherent in the Semitic mind.

#### § XXII: *Mark iv, 26-29*

Mark alone records another parable of similar import with the previous one, giving another of the explanations of Jesus with regard to his work.

The sowing of truth was very like the sowing of

grain and therefore subject to the natural law of growth. The sower must content himself with sowing the seed. It would spring up and grow, he could not tell how, but he could do nothing to expedite the process. He must wait in patience and faith for the results. In suggesting certain features of the growth of the grain, Jesus is merely calling attention to the fact that some time must elapse between his sowing and its harvest. He certainly is not calling attention to the evolution of Christian character, nor to the historical development of the Church. There are allegorical interpretations which have been put into the parable and which have formed the basis of thousands of sermons, but they were furthest from the thought of Jesus. Christians inherited the tendency to allegorise from the Jews, but were ignorant of the fact that allegorising Scripture was a Jewish method of explaining away some things which a higher civilisation had outgrown. It never was a method for illustrating truth, but often became the means of obscuring history.

This parable seems to show that Jesus had already modified his anticipations and had come to think that the coming of the Kingdom of God would be delayed until the seed which he was sowing had had time to produce a harvest of men fitted for citizenship.

§§ XXIII, XXIV: *Mark iv, 30-34; Luke xiii, 18-21; Matt. xiii, 31-35*

It needs to be borne in mind that the parables were originally contained in a collection of the "Sayings of Jesus," made probably by Matthew and contained in a Gospel which bore his name, of about the year 75 A.D. Mark borrowed such of the parables from the current

stock as seemed best fitted to his narrative, while Luke and Matthew incorporated the "Sayings" much more completely. Those which they have in common with Mark are often given in quite a different connection. From a careful comparison of the two later Gospels the attempt has been made by Harnack to reconstruct the lost book of "The Sayings of Jesus."

The parable of the mustard seed is common to all the Synoptic Gospels. It is thought by some of the critics that "mustard seed" cannot have been the original word in this place because the seed is not the smallest nor its plant the largest known, but this is childish criticism. The point of the parable remains unchanged.

Jesus is strengthening his faith and that of his disciples. Although the work which he is doing seems so insignificant, the results will be astonishing, because the influences which he is making operative will continue to work until they have produced a new life among the whole Jewish nation. There is no allegory in the parable, no prediction of a great Church which is to grow and spread throughout the world, giving shade and protection to all the nations of the earth. There was nothing of this sort in the mind of Jesus and, had there been, the disciples could not have been thought dull for not understanding it. It needs always to be borne in mind that Jesus expected the Kingdom of God to come suddenly, quickly, and supernaturally, God himself appearing in the clouds to establish his personal reign in a great Jewish kingdom of righteousness and joy and peace. The work which he felt to be specially his own was to make men expect its coming and fit themselves for it.

This parable is one of the many illustrations by which



he kept up his courage and that of his friends. The seed was naturally small, but the growth would more than exceed all anticipations.

Matthew and Luke give another parable, which seemed to them to belong in this connection. While the result of his work was sure, they were still not to be discouraged because they could not watch the process of growth. It was like yeast, lost to view in a large quantity of flour, but, although lost to view, it was at work all the time, increasing the ferment, permeating the mass, until, by and by, all the flour would be filled with a new life. So it would be with the teaching of Jesus. It would be lost to view in the mass of the Jewish people and yet it would be at work powerfully under the surface all the time, until by and by they would all show the transforming power of the new moral and spiritual leaven.

In these ways Jesus encouraged himself and warded off the crushing effects of disappointment which the dulness of the people, the hostility of the authorities, and the increasing defection of the masses had caused him.

§ XXV: *Mark iv, 35-41; Luke viii, 22-25; Matt. viii, 23-27*

Jesus often crossed the lake both for the sake of rest from the crowds and for safety from his enemies. The eastern shore belonged to the territory of Philip, another of the sons of Herod, but it was pagan territory, free from the influence of scribes and Pharisees, and Jesus was entirely safe among the heathen. On one of those crossings of the lake an event occurred which left a strong impression upon the minds of the disciples.

A great storm arose, during which Jesus was asleep. In their terror and distress the disciples woke him, but he upbraided them for their fear and lack of faith and calmed them by his quietness and confidence. Perhaps, also, he rebuked the wind, for he undoubtedly shared the popular belief that storms were caused by demoniac agency and that the winds were manifestations of conscious intelligences. When the storm ceased the disciples were not slow in concluding that he had caused it to cease. Afterwards the idealising phantasy embellished the account into that of a stupendous miracle.

The Gospels show the work of phantasy upon a simple basis of fact, for the later account which Mark gives (vi, 48) of Jesus walking upon the water is but a further embellishment of this same narrative, while a still later growth is shown in Matthew's account (Matt. xiv, 28) of Peter's attempt to walk on the water. The growth of such legends was inevitable from the fixed belief of the Jewish Christians that Jesus was the Messiah and that the Messiah would work astonishing miracles. They had precedents, also, in their Scriptures for just such accounts as these, not only in the story of Jonah, but in the 107th Psalm: "For he maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still."

In a world which knew nothing of any laws of nature, it was taken for granted that wonderful works would be the natural evidences of superhuman power, such as it was believed that the Messiah must have, but in the world of to-day, which recognises the universality and inviolability of law, any suspensions or counteractions of law are no longer recognised as possible. What we call a law of Nature is not some necessity of fate limiting the divine activity, but simply our recognition of

the way in which the supreme life in the universe acts. Our very confidence in the uniformity of Nature has given us a larger realisation of God than was possible to men, who looked for him only in what was unusual.

The world has not become godless and irreligious, but vastly better fitted for true religion as a light and a power, in learning to deny absolutely any possibility of miracles.

In our search for the true story of Jesus, therefore, we must eliminate from the Gospel narratives all accounts of miracles, assigning them both to the credulity of an ignorant age and to the desire of Jewish Christians to prove that Jesus was the Messiah.

§ XXVI: *Mark v, 1-20; Luke viii, 26-39; Matt. viii, 28-34*

Jesus and his disciples landed probably somewhere near the north-eastern corner of the lake. Tradition could no longer tell where, when the Gospels were written, for Gadara cannot be right, as it is too far from the lake. On the north-eastern shore are some steep cliffs, such as the narrative calls for. They were met by a crazy man who lived among the rock tombs. Jesus calmed the man, who in his raving had frightened some swine so that they ran over the edge of the cliff and were drowned in the lake. So much is probably historical; but, with this for a basis, myth and possibly allegory have been worked up into an extravagant account, which is interesting because it shows some of the popular beliefs about demons. It was believed that they had names, which they tried to hide, but which the successful exorcist needed to know. It was thought that they were glad to inhabit the bodies of men or

animals, but dreaded to wander, as disembodied spirits, in desolate places, or to be thrown into the great abyss, whence it would be a long time before they emerged to find lodgment in another body.

Jesus is said to have declined to take this man with him, but to have told him to go home to his friends and tell them of his cure. Much ingenuity has been devoted to accounting for this, whereas in Galilee he always bade those who were healed of mental and nervous troubles not to tell of it. The reason ought to be obvious. In Galilee those who were healed were determined to proclaim him as the Messiah, which he did not wish to be considered, while on pagan territory there was no such danger and, whatever men might call him, there were no scribes and Pharisees to be aroused to increased hostility.

§ XXVII: *Mark v, 21-44; Luke viii, 40-56; Matt. ix, 18-26*

On returning to the western side of the lake, probably to Capernaum, Jesus is met by a ruler of the synagogue, Jairus by name, who asks him to come and heal his daughter who is at the point of death. On his way to the house he receives word, according to Mark and Luke, that the child is dead, while, according to Matthew, she was dead when he appealed to Jesus, who accordingly entreated him not to heal a sick child, but to restore a dead one to life. According to the earlier narratives Jesus told the father not to fear, but only to believe. With the crowd pressing about him he felt a sudden shock and asked, "Who touched me?" The disciples thought the question foolish, because people were unavoidably touching him all the time,

but Jesus was sure that he had experienced a discharge of force. Then there came a woman and confessed that she had touched the hem of his garment, because she felt sure that if she could do so she would be cured of a long-standing trouble, nor had she been disappointed, for she was already cured. Jesus assured her that her faith had made her whole. There is no doubt about the truth of this narrative, for it is in entire accord with all that we know to-day of the wonderful results of auto-suggestion. The woman expected to be healed and was healed. Her faith, that is her belief, had made her whole. Magnetic power was also brought into action. Jesus was undoubtedly full of magnetism and the touch of the woman caused a discharge, of which both he and she were conscious.

Although the story of Jairus's daughter, in the form in which it has come down to us, gives the impression that this was a miracle, the restoration of a dead child to life, it nevertheless holds to the fact that Jesus himself did not so regard it, but was sure from the first that the child was not dead, only asleep, or, as we should say to-day, in a state of syncope. The statement, preserved only in the earliest Gospel, that Jesus bade them give her something to eat, keeps the narrative within the domain of naturalness and accords with his statement that she was not dead, but faint from weakness.

When the operation of psychic forces is better understood than it is to-day this narrative will become doubly interesting, because it is so remarkable an illustration of the power of belief. Jesus had unlimited belief in the power of God working through him. He took with him the strongest of his disciples, whose belief in him was already unbounded, and the parents

of the child, whose belief was quickened by love. He thus acquired a combined power of suggestion which acted upon the mind of the child and restored her to consciousness. At least, this is possible, but there was no miracle.

§ XXVIII: *Mark vi, 1-6; Matt. xiii, 53-58*

At some time after these experiences Jesus visited Nazareth with his disciples and taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath. With the natural jealousy of provincials, the people at Nazareth were prejudiced against him and resented it that he had acquired such a reputation as a teacher and healer, while they had remained in the ruts of commonplaceness. They asked where did he get this learning that he presumed to teach in the synagogue and what is this power of his of which we hear so much? "Is not this the carpenter" with whom we have all grown up, "the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses, and Judas and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?"

To all these slurs Jesus replied, "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country and among his own kin and in his own house."

This statement by Mark is perfectly clear evidence that, when he wrote, about 67 A.D., no one among the Christians had heard of any stories of a miraculous birth. The people in Nazareth knew that he was Mary's son just as his brothers were her sons, and Mark had no different belief. Luke, who wrote at least thirty years later, after the stories of the miraculous birth had begun to circulate, suppressed the account of this visit to Nazareth altogether, because it contradicted the stories of the birth, and introduced the

account of preaching at Nazareth by Jesus at the beginning of his ministry, which cannot be historical. Matthew had less literary ability than Luke and did not see that this account contradicted the stories of the birth; but he softened down one of the statements of Mark in an interesting way. Mark makes the people ask, "Is not this the carpenter?" but Matthew is unwilling to think of the Messiah as having been a carpenter and changes the question into, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" Mark also says that Jesus could not do any wonderful work in Nazareth, on account of their unbelief, implying, as he always does, that he was dependent for results upon an atmosphere of belief. Matthew, on the contrary, dislikes to limit the power of Jesus by saying that he *could* not, but says merely that he *did* not, giving the impression that it was to punish the people for their unbelief.

§ XXIX: *Mark vi, 7-13; Luke ix, 1-6; Matt. x, 1-15*

Jesus felt that the work which lay nearest to his heart, that of proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God, would be expedited if he sent out his disciples upon a preaching tour among the neighbouring villages. Just what instructions he gave them the Christians of a later generation did not know, but, judging that the circumstances were similar to those in their own day, they seem to have supplied the details of this earlier missionary work largely from their own experience. Part of the account in Mark's Gospel is the most natural and probable.

They were to go in pairs in different directions, each taking a staff and wearing sandals. They were not to carry a pouch, nor bread, nor even the small copper

money of the country, but to depend entirely upon hospitality. In each town they were to inquire for some worthy man and remain as his guests, not going from house to house, thus avoiding local entanglements. If the people in any place would not listen to them gladly, they were to hurry on to another place. Mark says that they preached that men should repent, which undoubtedly they did, but this was secondary to their greater theme that the Kingdom of God was coming. Because it was coming, men must get ready for it, by changing their lives, so as to be worthy of citizenship. Matthew appreciated this point better than Mark, reporting as the instruction of Jesus (Matt. x, 7): "As ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The reported instruction that, wherever they encountered hostility they were to shake off the dust of the road for a testimony against the people of a town, is contrary to the spirit and teaching of Jesus and cannot have come from him. It displays a narrow and intense fanaticism and must reflect the spirit of the early Christians in their missionary efforts to convert the Jews to their belief that Jesus was the Messiah. The same is true of the reference to Sodom and Gomorrah in Matthew's Gospel.

How little the early Christians understood Jesus is evident from the statement that, in sending out the disciples, he gave them power over unclean spirits, as if this had been the chief object of his work and their work; but Mark wrote for people in the great pagan world outside of Palestine and never omitted an opportunity to impress them with the supposed supernaturalness of Jesus. The disciples from contact with Jesus had possibly developed some psychic force



and were able to heal some diseases of a nervous origin, but the use of this power was far from being the purpose of their mission. That Mark drew much from his imagination is evident from the thirteenth verse, in which he states that they "anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them." Jesus never used oil, nor resorted to any of the methods of the professional exorcists in healing the sick and he certainly did not recommend such methods to his disciples, nor was such use of oil in vogue among the Jews or the Arabs. It was altogether a pagan custom, so that the thirteenth verse of the sixth chapter, either by Mark himself or by some copyist, is an adaptation of the Gospel to pagan readers.

As regards the equipment for the missionary tour, there are slight discrepancies between the three Gospels. Mark says that the disciples were to have staves and sandals, Luke says **no** staves while Matthew says neither staves nor sandals.

These discrepancies are unimportant, but they show how each writer filled in details from his own imagination and are damaging to all theories of inspiration.

In connection with this sending out of the disciples to preach, Matthew adds a long list of instructions which Jesus is represented as giving them, in which he mixes up things belonging to different dates with a total disregard of history, the greater part being reminiscences from the later missionary work of the Christians.

They were to beware of men, who would deliver them up to councils and scourge them in the synagogues and they would be brought before kings and governors for a testimony to Jews and Gentiles and yet, in the same instructions, they are bidden to keep away from Gentiles and Samaritans and to confine their preaching to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." A brother

would deliver up his brother to death and a father his child. Children would rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death and they would be hated of all men. Surely these dreadful consequences were not expected to result from the preaching of twelve men among the small villages of Galilee. They did happen afterwards, during the great Jewish persecution of Christians, beginning with the death of Stephen, but Matthew, with incomprehensible naïveté, imagines that Jesus expected his disciples to suffer great persecutions as a result of their harmless missionary journey and, although he supposes that he anticipated trouble for them from the Gentiles, he is thought to have assured them that they would not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man had come.

Some of the advice concerning modesty and courage is no doubt genuine, but Luke gives these sayings more properly in a different connection.

The reference to taking up the cross and following Jesus could not have come from him, for it was impossible before the crucifixion, nor would it have occurred to any one afterwards except in time of persecution, nor could Jesus have possibly suggested to the twelve men whom he sent out to preach that they might lose their lives as a result.

It is a great misfortune that any writer of a Gospel should have been so entirely without historical consciousness, but it becomes unpardonable to-day if a better knowledge of history is not allowed to correct ancient blundering in the interest of truth.

## II. A. THE PERIOD OF WANDERING

### §§ XXX-XLII

§ XXX: *Mark vi, 14-29; Luke ix, 7-9; Matt. xiv, 1-12*

The alarm of Herod Antipas at the excitement among the people of Galilee, caused by the preaching of Jesus, greatly increased the danger to which he was exposed and made it necessary, if he would escape the fate of John the Baptist, to be always on his guard, to avoid publicity as much as possible, to keep away from the larger towns, and at times to seek safety upon foreign and pagan soil. There was much speculation concerning him. Some took him to be Elijah, in accordance with a popular belief that he would return before the coming of the Kingdom of God, others thought him to be a prophet, like any of the old prophets, while Herod Antipas, with superstitious fear, thought that he must be John the Baptist returned to life. Herod was undoubtedly much disturbed and thus the danger to Jesus was increased.

Mark introduces a story about the death of John the Baptist which was no doubt popularly believed, but which contains some features of extreme improbability. Herod had married his brother's wife, who preferred being the wife of a small Oriental ruler to that of a private gentleman in Rome. John had probably denounced the wickedness and the public assigned the hatred of Herodias as the cause of his arrest, while Josephus states with more probability that Herod

arrested him from the fear of a political uprising. Josephus also says that John was imprisoned in Machærus, a castle high up in a valley east of the Dead Sea, which interferes with the story of Herod's birthday supper, since it would have been impossible to transport "the lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee" from Tiberias to Machærus to celebrate that event.

If there were such a supper it was at Tiberias and, if the story of the dancing and its results be true and John were imprisoned at Machærus, then some time must have elapsed between the request and the beheading, so that the tragic scene of the head being brought at once on a charger will have to be dismissed, as unhistorical. That the story is overdrawn is evident from the fact that Herod could not give away half of his tetrarchy, since only Tiberius could do that. Mark shows his lack of acquaintance with the facts by calling Herod a king, while Luke, of much superior literary ability, discredits the story altogether and omits it from his Gospel.

§ XXXI: *Mark vi, 30-33; Luke ix, 10-12; Matt. xiv, 13-18*

The apostles returned from their missionary journey and told Jesus what they had done and what they had taught. He bade them come apart with him into a desert place to rest, for in Capernaum the crowd left them no leisure, not even to eat.

The people were certainly wrought up to a high state of religious excitement and expectation and it is not at all improbable that many may have followed the course of the boat, running along the shore and in-

creasing in number by the way, so that, instead of a quiet resting place, Jesus found a great multitude assembled soon after his arrival at the territory of Philip. Luke said afterwards that it was near Bethsaida.

§ XXXII: *Mark vi, 34-44; Luke ix, 12-17; Matt. xiv, 14-21*

Here, in this secluded spot, relieved of all danger from the Pharisees and from Herod, one of the memorable events occurred which left a deep and lasting impression upon the minds of the Christians.

If, with minds free from all prejudice, we try to make ourselves part of the multitude which thronged about Jesus we shall the better understand the wonderful things which happened. Jesus had compassion on the people because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, men with no one to care for them, to love them or to help them, neglected by the exponents of orthodox religion and despised because they did not understand the intricacies of the Jewish law, until they had come to think of themselves as mere worthless chaff; but here was one who appealed to their manhood, who told them of their latent powers for goodness, of a yoke which was light and easy, because it rested upon the spontaneity of righteous motives, instead of crushing them with the burden of the prescriptions of the law, of the great Kingdom of God, which was coming soon for just such as they, to do away with sorrow and pain, to set aside the injustice and cruelty of life, and to fill the world with sweetness and joy for such as had learned to do the will of God. As Jesus talked to them thus his enthusiasm grew, his sympathy won their hearts, the magnetism of his wonderful personality

kept them enthralled, and they were wrought up to so high a state of tension that they were oblivious of everything but him and his gracious words concerning the coming of the Kingdom of God. As evening approached some of the disciples came to him to suggest that the people must be hungry. It would be well to send them away into the neighbouring villages to buy food. Jesus could not stop talking, the people could not have him stop. All were too much wrought up. He seems to have said to the disciples, "Give them something to eat," and to have gone on talking. The disciples came a second time with the question—should they go and buy bread for so much? Jesus seems to have told them to give the people what they had and to have gone on talking. Afterwards it seemed as if they had all been fed, but it was certainly a case where great spiritual excitement entirely suspended the consciousness of bodily wants. The experience left a great impression, but to men of a later generation who had not shared the spiritual tension the reports seemed to relate to an astonishing miracle, as the result of which not only thousands of men had been fed, but more food was left than the original supply. The story of a miracle has obscured the real historical fact that at times the preaching of Jesus wrought so powerfully both upon him and his hearers as to make both him and them oblivious of everything but his message.

§ XXXIII: *Mark vi, 46-52; Matt. xiv, 22-32*

The second account of the stilling of the waves is but another version of the original story and illustrates the method of writing a Gospel, separate narratives being taken either from earlier Aramaic Gospels, of

which there were several, or from oral tradition, and loosely thrown together, with only a general knowledge of the sequence of events, the main purpose being to impress the readers with the wonder-working power of Jesus, presented to Jewish Christians as the Messiah and to pagans as the Son of God. The different versions of what was originally an impressive experience illustrate the working of the myth-making faculty among credulous and enthusiastic people. At first Jesus quiets the wind with a word. In a later generation he is said to have walked on the waves through the storm, and, later still, when Matthew's Gospel was written, Peter essays to do the same thing and is sustained on the water by Jesus. Luke omits this narrative from his Gospel.

§ XXXIV: *Mark vi, 53-56; Matt. xiv, 34-36*

On returning to the western shore of the lake Jesus seems to have reached the culmination of his popularity with the common people, a popularity, however, which caused him much grief, since it was due almost entirely to the healing of diseases, while he was obliged to wait with faith and patience for the growing of the seed of better things which he was sowing upon a reluctant and unpromising soil.

§§ XXXV, XXXVI: *Mark vii, 1-23; Matt. xv, 1-20*

The return to Galilee and consequent renewal of popular enthusiasm afforded his enemies the opportunity for a more systematic attack than they had hitherto made upon him.

For this purpose scribes and Pharisees came from

Jerusalem that with their superior skill they might defeat him in argument and damage his reputation among the people as a dangerous man and an open violator of the law. These men soon discovered some of the disciples eating bread without having first washed their hands according to the prescription of the "tradition of the elders," which ruled that the water must be poured, what kind of water might be used, who might pour it, and how far up the hands it must go. Any infringement of the rules rendered one ceremonially unclean and was held to be a serious offence, showing a lawless and irreligious disposition. Ever since the exile, the object of the scribes had been to separate the Jewish people from all other people, and the chief purpose of the ever-increasing prescriptions was to emphasise the separateness.

The laws concerning purifications included cups, pots, dishes, and seats, the material of each, the shape of each, the amount which might be broken or lacking, whether a thing could be purified or had to be broken, the kind and quantity of water which might be used for purifying, and whether snow, hail, hoar frost, or ice might be mixed with it. Persons and things became "unclean" originally through contact with unclean animals dead bodies, or lepers, but these earlier rules had been extended by the scribes to include uncleanness acquired by contact or association with people who did not keep the law down to its most minute detail.

The explanation in the third and fourth verses of Mark's Gospel makes it evident that he wrote for foreigners, who were unacquainted with Jewish customs.

Jesus does not condescend to answer the question of the Pharisees as to why the disciples ate without first



washing their hands, but turns upon them with a torrent of denunciation, showing them up before the people as men who had made hypocrisy a profession and a fine art. Mark's portraiture of Jesus is that of a grand, heroic, and fearless reformer, full of intense feeling and showing at times impatience, contempt, and indignation. It is Luke's picture of a Jesus who is never aroused from a sweet gentleness of disposition which has become the favourite conception of him in the Christian world, but Mark's picture is truer to history. He certainly knew people who had known Jesus personally, which Luke never did, and he wrote much earlier than the latter, who shows, both in his Gospel and in the Book of the Acts, a tendency to smooth over all roughnesses and disagreements and has therefore given us a picture of a "meek and gentle" Jesus, which is much further from history than Mark's picture of bitter conflicts and heroic courage.

Jesus turns upon his enemies with the assertion that they are no better than their fathers, whom Isaiah had denounced as hypocrites centuries before. They had killed religion, he told them, with externalism and even set aside one of the great laws which they recognised as a law of God, by recourse to their traditions. The law had said that a man must honour his father and mother, which naturally included his duty to provide for their comfort in their old age, but "the traditions of the elders" had made it possible for a man to tie up his property by making it a votive offering for the benefit of the temple or the priests and to be relieved thereby of all necessity of caring for his father and mother.

Jesus, having put the Pharisees into a very uncomfortable position, called the people about him and gave

them one of his great sayings concerning the moral reality of religion. To eat without washing his hands could not make a man unclean, no external conventionalities could make him either clean or unclean, for the really unclean things came from within. This he had to explain afterwards to the disciples. It was not the things which a man took into his stomach, but the things which came out of his heart, which made a man unclean; the evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. In other words, character was greater than conventionality, or, rather character was the real thing and conventionality nothing. This was wonderful teaching among a people to whom conformity had become so important that character had dropped out of sight altogether and, whenever in the course of subsequent ages an organised ecclesiasticism has hardened people within the ruts of external religion, these words of Jesus have been the inspiration of reform: "That which cometh out of a man, that defileth a man, but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man." It is an interesting question whether Jesus realised the full force and application of what he had said. It was one of those great truths which came out of the depth of his heart in a moment of exaltation, a direct intuition of moral truth without any intellectual consideration of its consequences. It really undermined and abrogated the whole system of Judaism and undoubtedly some of the Jews so understood it, for if once the principle were allowed that character was more important than conformity, then any religion of rules and observances was doomed.

Luke omits this account altogether, probably from

his desire to cover up all accounts of controversy, but Matthew's Gospel adds a statement for which there may be a good historical foundation. He says that when the disciples came to ask Jesus for an explanation they told him that the Pharisees were very angry, to which he replied, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And, if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch." No one ever had so strong a faith in the victory of truth as Jesus. It seemed to him like a divine plant which God planted wherever there was a promising soil; but no other plants had the same vitality. They would surely wither in time. Let them alone: controversy would do no good, arguments would not avail. If these men were not teaching truth, both they and their followers would come to grief. Jesus was wonderful. He had absolute faith in God and in the divine vitality of truth, a faith which his followers have seldom shared, feeling the rather that truth could not survive without their assistance and protection.

§ XXXVII: *Mark vii, 24-30; Matt. xv, 21-28*

It is quite probable that on account of the new outbreak of hostility Jesus found it expedient to leave the country with his disciples. He is said to have gone into the region north of Galilee which belonged to Tyre and Sidon and to have remained there for some time in hiding from his enemies.

The people of this region were not without knowledge of him, for the main roads of travel and commerce crossed each other near the northern end of the Lake of Galilee and there was much intercourse in all directions.

Believing, as Jesus did, that the Kingdom of God was coming very soon, God appearing in the clouds to open judgment and establish his reign, and that he was specially charged to proclaim its coming and to urge men to a preparation for citizenship, it must have been with a crushing heartache that he turned away from his work and went as a fugitive to a foreign land.

Whether the story of the healing of the daughter of a Syrophenician woman be historically true or not, the words assigned to Jesus are undoubtedly genuine and disclose the depth of his grief. He felt that his message was for Jews, and yet he was prevented from delivering it to them, but it was not a message for the pagan world. It would not be right to take the children's bread and give it to dogs. This feeling expressed to the disciples may have been the nucleus out of which the story grew, while the reported answer of the woman that the dogs might eat of the crumbs which fell from the Master's table seems to express the later attitude of Christian Jews towards Christians in the great world outside. They might pick up some of the crumbs, but they were not the lawful heirs of the "promises." Paul always imagined that the Jews had a prior claim and it is quite possible that this whole account is a later allegory for which the grief of Jesus at the loss of opportunity afforded an historical basis.

#### § XXXVIII: *Mark vii, 31-37*

Mark alone relates that Jesus, journeying eastward, came again into the domain of Philip, where he healed a deaf man who had also an impediment in his speech. It is certainly quite possible, in accordance with many other healings, but there is one feature of the narrative

which makes it doubtful. In all the other accounts the healing is the result of power working through belief. In this case Jesus is said to have resorted to devices calculated to impress the imagination of the man. So entire a departure from his ordinary method and the adoption of the expedients of professional exorcists make the narrative extremely doubtful.

§ XXXIX: *Mark viii, 1-9; Matt. xv, 32-39*

This is simply the story of the feeding of the multitude from another source which had not preserved so well the fundamental and really historical features of the experience.

In the other account Jesus had compassion on the multitude, because they were as sheep without a shepherd; here he is sorry for them, because they are hungry. Then an impassioned talk had apparently suspended the consciousness of bodily needs, here Jesus sets out deliberately to work a miracle. This is not historical.

§ § XL, XLI: *Mark viii, 10-21; Matt. xv, 39-xvi, 12*

It is impossible to follow the frequent crossings of the lake as related by Mark, but it seems very probable that the intense desire on the part of Jesus to be at his regular work again led him on one occasion to venture back to the western shore, where the charm of his personality and the great number of his healings had already aroused a feeling among the people that he might be the Messiah.

To counteract this the Pharisees met him soon after his landing with the demand for a miracle. If he were the Messiah he certainly would be willing to prove it

by showing something wonderful as the evidence of supernatural power. If he declined, he could not be the Messiah and the Pharisees would the more readily persuade the people that he was an impostor. Jesus declared that there would be no miracle. The demand and the answer are evidence that neither the Pharisees, nor the people, nor Jesus regarded the healings as miraculous. His answer also makes it evident that there were no miracles at any time and therefore that all accounts of miracles are due to the later phantasy of the Jewish Christians, who believed as the Pharisees did that the Messiah would inevitably work miracles, and who, believing that Jesus was the Messiah, supplied the miracles to prove the correctness of their belief and so to win converts. The demand for the miraculous on their part is evident from Matthew's Gospel, for by the time that Gospel was written the Christians could not be satisfied with a statement that Jesus had said that there would be no miracles, but imagined that he had added, "except the sign of the prophet Jonah." It had become customary to take the story of Jonah and the whale as a type prophetic of the physical resurrection of Jesus, and therefore they imagined that Jesus had prophesied in this enigmatical way his death and resurrection to certain Pharisees, all of which is impossible; for Jesus was not expecting to die, but to witness the coming of the Kingdom of God. As he did not expect to die, he did not expect a resurrection, and therefore prophesied neither; nor would he, having said that there would be no sign, at once have suggested a sign in the future in words which no one present could have understood.

The new experience had been entirely disheartening and Jesus felt it necessary to return again with his

disciples to the eastern shore. On the way, thinking over recent events and the animus of the Pharisees, he broke out suddenly to the disciples with the warning, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." It is perfectly evident to-day what he meant. The leaven of the Pharisees was the force which had shaped the ideas, notions, beliefs, and habits of the disciples from childhood up. Their ideas of God, sin, judgment, and atonement were Pharisaic. Their notions of a Devil, good and bad angels, Heaven and Hell, and the infallibility of their Scriptures they had acquired from the Pharisees. Their belief that the religious life consisted in the keeping of a long list of rules, without regard to the motives, ideals, or desires of the inner man, was the result of Pharisaic teaching.

Such was the "leaven of the Pharisees," and Jesus bid them beware of it. It was necessary not only to be on their guard against it, but to outgrow it, to become emancipated from its control and to cast it entirely out of their lives, if they were ever to attain the wonderful moral and spiritual realities which he was trying to make them comprehend, and acquire the living consciousness of God, the right and duty of moral judgment, and the spontaneity of goodness in conduct, springing from the awakened love of goodness in the heart. It was this complete change in the whole human attitude which Jesus meant when he bade men "repent" because the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand.

And yet it was impossible for these men to make so complete a change, or even to understand the necessity for it, since the leaven of the Pharisees was part of the very substance of their mental, moral, and spiritual temperaments. How entirely they failed to understand him is evident from the account that they

thought he was blaming them for not having brought more bread, and that he recalled the supposed miraculous feeding of the multitude as evidence that with a single loaf he could make any amount of bread desired.

More than two generations later the meaning of Jesus did dawn upon the author of the first Gospel, for he makes Jesus explain that he was not referring to the leaven of bread, but to the doctrine of the Pharisees.

He is guilty of an anachronism, however, in adding the words, "and of the Sadducees," for, so far as the Gospels show, Jesus had not at that time come into contact with the Sadducees at all. Quite possibly he thought that this was an improvement upon the addition, which Mark had made in adding the words, "and of the leaven of Herod," since those words are meaningless. One could not speak of the leaven of Herod, for leaven is a force, not an attitude, and, as applied to men, represents the ideas, beliefs, and habits which form and control character. Jesus was on his guard against Herod, but he could not have spoken of the "leaven of Herod." It was his recent experience of the attitude and animus of Pharisaism which made him warn the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees, since he realised more clearly than ever how entirely these men must break away from their mental inheritance, if they were to render valuable assistance in preparing men for citizenship in the Kingdom of God.

Luke, who recorded this saying of Jesus (xii, 1,) in an entirely different connection, discarded Mark's explanation about the bread; but was still far from understanding it, if he added the words "which is hypocrisy," for hypocrisy is only one of the results of the working



of the leaven and not the leaven itself, and Jesus was not thinking of results but of causes. Luke's explanation of the warning of Jesus, however, became the popular one and has generally satisfied the Christian consciousness from his day to our own. It is quite possible that he did not write the words "which is hypocrisy," but that they were originally a marginal gloss by some scribe which later crept into the text.

§ XLII: *Mark viii, 22-26*

This is another account of healing, which Mark alone gives and in which the introduction of the method of magicians is entirely contrary to the customs of Jesus in making healing purely the result of belief, and may therefore be omitted as **unhistorical**.

## II. B. JESUS ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM

### §§ XLIII-LIV

§§ XLIII, XLIV: *Mark viii, 27-ix, 1; Luke ix, 18-27;*  
*Matt. xvi, 13-28*

In consequence of recent experiences and while at this time in the territory of Philip, Jesus realised that he had reached a crisis in his life and that, if he were to accomplish the work which he had at heart, something very serious must be undertaken. He could no longer preach in Galilee. The crowds which thronged about him everywhere gave few evidences of any moral results of his preaching, while the Pharisees were ever ready with new attacks and had largely undermined his influence. And then, at any time, Herod might arrest him, under the pretence that he was a dangerous man who might incite the people to revolt. There was nothing left for him to do but to go to Jerusalem in the hope of arousing the nation at the centre of its life, that the forces of a great preparation for the Kingdom of God might spread from there through all classes of the Jewish people. He realised that it was a dangerous undertaking, that it led to certain controversy, bitter hostility, and possibly to death, and yet he was so sure of the coming of the Kingdom of God and of his mission to proclaim its coming that the actual danger of his own death seemed only a remote possibility; for, while the coming of the Kingdom depended wholly upon God, he fully expected to welcome its coming

and to enter with joy into his share of the victory. He had counted the cost and had reached the courageous decision to go to Jerusalem, willing to enter upon the struggle, to lay down his life, if need be, but leaving the result to God. But would he have to go alone? Would his little company of chosen friends go with him, would they be willing to break away from their homes, to leave their wives and children, perhaps for ever, to abandon their occupations and all sources of a livelihood and set out upon so apparently hopeless an undertaking as that of attacking the citadel of Jewish fanaticism and power, expecting to convert Sadducees intrenched behind centuries of prestige, barricaded by vast treasures of gold, believed by the people to wield the awful power of absolution and friends of Rome; expecting to win Pharisees from their rabbinical orthodoxy, their hair-splitting legalism, and their satisfaction with the cleanness of the outside of the platter to the kind of righteousness exceeding theirs of which he said that it alone would admit one to the Kingdom of God; expecting to persuade men who lived always under the shadow of the temple and the schools to believe the Gospel which he preached, when he had had so little real success among the freer people of the North? Would these friends of his volunteer to go upon this forlorn hope, not only sacrificing everything which the heart held dear, but taking their lives in their hands? It was necessary for him to know. In one of the outlying villages near Cæsarea Philippi, some twenty-five miles north of the Lake of Galilee, he began to feel his way with them, asking them what the people thought of him. They knew that he was distressed and disappointed and in perplexity, and they tried to comfort him by showing

him that he had made a great impression upon them. Some, they told him, thought that he was John the Baptist come to life again, others that he was Elijah, and still others that he was one of the old prophets, possibly Jeremiah, or, at least, a new prophet like the old ones. Jesus, however, was leading up to a more important question and asked them, "Whom do ye say that I am?" They had apparently come to no conclusion. They were devotedly attached to him and their wonder had grown, as they knew him better, but they had not known what to think. Peter answered under the impulse of a sudden conviction, "Thou art the Messiah." It was the great critical moment in the life of Jesus and, so far as we can see, in the history of the world, for out of that declaration grew the journey to Jerusalem and the subsequent crucifixion; the revival of belief among the disciples, the beginning of a propaganda, the conversion of Paul, the rise of a new religion for the world, and the conservation of the faith and ideality of Jesus, as the regenerating leaven of the human race. The declaration, coming as it did from Peter, meant that he, at least, believed more than the people did concerning Jesus. For him he was no longer a forerunner, like John, or Elijah, or a new prophet preparing the way for the Kingdom of God, but the actual agent of God, who would make the Kingdom a reality. Possibly Jesus had begun to think that this might be his mission and that he might really be the Messiah, but of this he was not sure. He would leave the result to God and while awaiting God's time he bade the disciples keep this belief to themselves. Neither he nor they could really think of a Messiah who was antagonised, denounced, persecuted, and an actual fugitive in a foreign land, nor would it avail under such

circumstances to proclaim such a belief. Let them hold it if they would, but keep it to themselves. Jesus would not decide the question for himself, but would wait for circumstances to show the mind of God. Innumerable volumes have been written upon this problem, as to whether Jesus thought himself the Messiah or not and, if he did, whether his conception of the Messiah was not entirely different from the popular one, an unpolitical, heavenly, or spiritual Messiah, in place of the great conqueror and ruler expected by the Jewish people, but while Jesus certainly had no political aspirations, there is nothing in the Gospels to show that he altered in any way the popular notion of a Messiah as held by the disciples. The simplest interpretation, notwithstanding all that has been written upon the subject, is that he did not think of himself as the Messiah and that for this reason he told the disciples not to make the belief expressed by Peter known. Furthermore, his intended journey to Jerusalem, with its certain conflicts and unknown dangers, filled a much larger place in his mind than the question whether he were the Messiah or not, while for us it is amazing that the men who write the "Lives of Jesus" can take the question of a Messiah so seriously, since a Messiah was simply a creation of the Jewish phantasy in the century before the time of Jesus, without any possible corresponding reality. Jesus had not seriously considered the question as concerned himself, but, feeling the burden of a great duty weighing upon him, was content to discharge that duty with patience and courage and to set aside all subordinate questions until results should show the verdict of God.

Having bidden the disciples to keep their personal beliefs concerning him to themselves, Jesus disclosed

to them the great project which he had formed for the larger execution of his work. He would go to Jerusalem and hoped that they would go with him, and yet he would not have them go under the spur of devotion and enthusiasm and without a full realisation of the struggles which were inevitable and the danger to life which was probable. A generation later, after the Christians had learned to put strange theoretical constructions upon everything connected with his life and death, it seemed to them that he must at this time have told the disciples that he was going to Jerusalem in order that he might suffer and be rejected and be put to death.

They even got to thinking that being put to death was the chief object and purpose of his life, and went so far as to say that he had come into the world from a higher and heavenly region in obedience to the command of God for the purpose of being put to death, and that his death had been the result of a divine arrangement which made it possible for God to forgive the sins of the elect. These speculations took form in the Pauline theology, but they were already growing in Jewish-Christian soil before Paul wrote, since they were rooted in rabbinical ideas, while Gentile Christians had not the necessary equipment for setting them aside as having no historical foundation and as unworthy of intelligent belief. Thus they have formed the unfortunate inheritance of Christendom and have served through all the centuries to hide away the real Jesus behind the dogmatic barriers of a petrified speculation and the clouds of mythological delusion. For, if Jesus were only acting a part, passing through the successive phases of a pre-arranged rôle, he loses at once his splendid personality, his magnificent heroism,

his glowing enthusiasm, his supreme devotion to his convictions as to what was right and true, and becomes simply a puppet moved hither and yon upon the stage of life, as if by strings held in the hands of God, a mere plaything of divine caprice, or the victim of relentless fate. The Christian depreciation of him reached its culmination when a Christian writer went so far as to say that he surrendered himself to the cruelty of God for the sake of reward, for what he could get out of it for himself in return, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God." Heb. xii, 2. This is positively shocking, but it shows how entirely the early Christians, misled by their theories, failed to comprehend the faith and hope, the courage and devotion, with which Jesus entered upon his journey to Jerusalem. He did not go in order that he might be killed and in fulfilment of a divine decree requiring his death, but to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God and to win as many men as possible into so sincere a belief in its coming that they would transform their lives and in the wedding garment of a worthy citizenship await their share in the victory and joy.

Jesus had not disguised from himself the certainty of struggles worse than any which he had encountered in Galilee, nor the possibility that the hatred of theologians might accomplish his death. He did not conceal the prospect from his disciples, but Peter, full of enthusiasm over the belief which he had just expressed that Jesus was the Messiah, found it incompatible with all his inherited ideas on the subject that the Messiah should have enemies, or be obliged to struggle, or be roughly handled, or be in any danger of death. He began to explain to him that the struggles and

dangers of which he had been telling them were impossible for the Messiah, who was to be a conqueror, ruler, and judge, and no doubt tried to persuade him not to go to Jerusalem until he had acquired so strong a following in Galilee that he could go there in all the pride and power of the openly recognised Messiah. Jesus had had a great struggle with himself in coming to his resolution, for, while he was brave, he shrank from conflict; but he needed friends to encourage him, not to weaken him, so that Peter's attempt to dissuade him seemed like a covert attack from Satan himself, whose kingdom he felt that he was engaged in overthrowing, and he undoubtedly turned upon him with the words: "Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men," implying, as another of his great principles, that one ought to act according to his conscience, with no consideration for motives of prudence, and to do what he believed to be right regardless of consequences. The rebuke to Peter was afterwards suppressed by Luke, apparently because it threw discredit upon Peter.

The expression of the belief of Peter, which the other disciples apparently shared, gave Jesus the confidence that he could depend upon them as his companions to Jerusalem, but he needed a larger following and, soon after this experience with them, he called for volunteers from the larger company of his friends to go with him also upon his perilous journey, but not until he had shown them fully the trials and dangers which they might expect.

By the unfortunate inability of men to develop an historical consciousness, the Christian religion has often been interpreted as a "following" of Jesus and



to this day the familiar theme of revivalism is the call to "follow" him. The desire and effort, however, to incorporate the spirit of Jesus into one's life and to make his living faith, his glowing hope, and his all-embracing love the ruling forces for the shaping of conduct are by no means a following of Jesus, for that following was unique and could not be repeated, except at similar crises. Men were called upon to volunteer to follow him to Jerusalem in order to assist in preparing for the coming of the Kingdom of God by attacking Judaism at the centre of its power, and Jesus told them plainly what it would cost to enlist for so great an undertaking. It required the most absolute and complete self-denial, and he always explained to those who were disposed to follow him what this self-denial included. They would have to let everything go—family, friends, property, reputation, occupation, everything which made life easy and pleasant and, taking their lives in their hands, devote themselves body and soul to the one great purpose of preparing on a grand scale for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Men have "followed" Jesus in many ages and in many lands, whenever and wherever the noble ideals of civil or religious liberty have won them to a surrender of everything, even of life itself, and impelled them to join in the struggle of the ages for the emancipation of the body and the mind; but to call the ordinary conformity to some transient orthodoxy of belief or custom a "following" of Jesus is to ignore history and to detract from the ideality which inspired and the bravery which carried out that stupendous undertaking.

The entire lack of historical consciousness and the inability of Christians to understand, even in the simplest way, the beliefs and hopes of Jesus gave rise,

long before a century had passed away, to the unfortunate delusion that he, instead of warning those who offered themselves for the journey to Jerusalem of the sacrifices which they must make and the dangers which they would incur, was counselling extreme asceticism as the real standard of human excellence for all people at all times. This led inevitably to monasticism, as the normal pattern of religious living, later to the double standard of morals taught by Rome and, later still, to the various forms of fanaticism, which have darkened the records of Protestant Christianity. A little realisation of history would have saved the world much blundering and many chapters of human misery would have remained unwritten, for Jesus was no ascetic and never denounced the honest occupations, nor the innocent joys of life; but, when one goes to war, one leaves behind the ordinary pursuits and all the pleasant entanglements of peace, and Jesus was going to war, to war in its most bitter, cruel, and relentless form, a war against priests, theologians, fanatics, and the passions and prejudices of the multitude. Those who would enlist for such a war must go in light marching order, entirely free from all the bonds which ordinarily unite one to family, business, or society.

This is all there is in the so-called "ascetic side" of the teaching of Jesus, for he was not laying down rules for other men, in other ages, rules for all time, the observance of which should make men his "followers," least of all was he legislating for a great world-wide religion organised into a Church. Such an idea was contrary to everything that he believed and lived for. For him the Kingdom of God was coming and, at the very latest, within the lifetime of some of those to whom he was talking, for he said to them (Mk. ix, 1):

"Verily I say unto you, There be some here, of them that stand by, who will in no wise taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God come with power."

While he took particular care that no one should volunteer for the journey to Jerusalem without a clear understanding of the sacrifices which his action entailed, he did not say that any one must take up his cross; for, in the first place, he was not expecting to be killed, and, if he had had any such anticipation, it would not have taken the form of a crucifixion by the Roman authorities. The Jewish mode of killing people was by stoning, but the power of life and death had been taken away from them by the Roman Government and, as Jesus had done nothing to arouse its hostility, it seemed to him that, if he were to lose his life, it could be only through mob violence or by means of a hired assassin. The reference to taking up the cross dates from the early persecutions of Christians by the Jews, during which it seemed to the Christians that there was to be a continuous "following" of Jesus in ways which led to persecution and death.

After he had shown the people the sacrifices and dangers of the movement upon Jerusalem, he made the strongest possible appeal to them to enlist for the great undertaking. Suppose a man should shrink from the sacrifices and dangers in order to save his life and the things which made it comfortable and pleasant, he would not save it after all; for, when the Kingdom came, he would be found an unprofitable servant, unworthy of citizenship, and would be swept away in the great destruction which would remove all obstacles from the new dominion of righteousness and joy. If, therefore, they held back from the attack upon Jerusalem, they must not deceive themselves

with any feeling of false security, for whosoever undertook to save his life would lose it. On the other hand, whosoever had enough faith and interest in the Kingdom of God to sacrifice everything for it now, would, when it came, be rewarded a hundred-fold in lands, houses, friends, and everything which made life a joy; for all the good things of the world would be redistributed among those who had proved themselves worthy of citizenship. Therefore, he who was willing to lose his life now for the sake of Jesus and his message would save it for the glories and the joys of the grand Kingdom of God when it should come; for, while the coming Kingdom would be full of righteousness, it would be quite as material as the existing kingdom of "the prince of this world" and all things would go on as at present, but without the disfigurements of injustice, disease, poverty, and crime.

The argument of Jesus with the people was all in the question what good would it do them if they held on to their possessions and accumulated more and more until they owned the earth, if they were to lose life itself in the great judgment which would precede the inauguration of the Kingdom; what would it profit a man if he gained the whole world and lost his own soul?

The alternative presented to them was much more vivid than it is to modern Christians who interpret being saved or lost with reference to far-off, ill-defined possibilities after death, whereas to the men who listened to Jesus and believed him the Kingdom of God was a magnificent reality sure to come to pass within a few short years, while to be saved was to pass the examination for admission, and to be lost was the failure to pass and the consequent being swept away to de-

struction. What would it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own life?

Jesus is said to have closed and enforced his call for volunteers by declaring that if they did not accept him and his message, the "Son of Man" would not recognise them when he came in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. This represents later beliefs among the early Jewish Christians and cannot have come from him, for he cannot have used the term "Son of Man" in two different ways, to mean now one thing and again something else. With him it was the common word for "man." With part of the population and later among Jewish Christians it was an expression for "The Messiah." He was not interested in Messianic beliefs and theories. This whole passage is expressed in the terms of later beliefs.

Beginning with this great crisis in the experience of Jesus, it must be recognised as a necessary historical correction of the traditions which became incorporated in the Gospels that all the supposed explanations with reference to his journey to Jerusalem are due to the theological speculations of the Christians a generation after the events and could not by any possibility have been made by him. He was not going to Jerusalem for the purpose of being killed, but solely in order to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God, and because he believed, as he told the priests after his arrival, that the time had come when God would take away the vineyard from its present unworthy husbandmen and give it to new husbandmen who would render to him its normal fruits.

"Thou art Peter"

In comparing the accounts of the great event at

Cæsarea Philippi in the Synoptic Gospels, we find in the Gospel of Matthew an interpolated passage, consisting of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth verses of the sixteenth chapter, which has exercised a tremendous influence in the development of the Christian world and has served to defeat or retard the work of Jesus by re-establishing on a larger scale the very things for the abolition of which he struggled, an absolute hierarchy, a petrified dogmatism, a conventionalised legalism, and the entire mental attitude which he included under "the leaven of the Pharisees."

The passage begins by making Jesus declare in response to Peter's recognition of him as "the Messiah, the Son of the living God," in which both Jewish and pagan interpretations are combined into a single formula that this declaration was the direct result of divine inspiration, that he never would have come to such a belief by the use of intelligence and reason, but divine illumination had enabled him to see through the disguise of poverty and humiliation and to recognise in Jesus both the real Messiah of the Jews and the great Son of God who would eventually be known as such throughout the whole pagan world.

The writers of the earlier Gospels had no such theory on the subject, but represent Peter's belief as the natural result of his own thought. What the writer of Matthew's Gospel seems to have gained is the conclusion that Jesus recognised the beliefs expressed by Peter as true and accepted for himself all that they implied, a very serious matter, which is at least left doubtful by the earlier Gospels. This conclusion implied in Matthew's Gospel is to be taken not as a corrective of the earlier and less definite accounts, but simply as the historical record of the development of Christian belief

upon this question and quite probably of the belief which later became general, that all conversions to the new religion were due to supernatural agency.

On the strength of this assumed revelation to Peter, Jesus is made to declare to him:

“Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth will be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

There is nothing in the Gospels concerning which it is so necessary to reach a sane and sober conclusion, as to whether it be true or false, genuine or spurious, as this passage. All the historic Churches base their claims and pretensions upon its assumed genuineness. Protestantism also accepts it as true, while trying to escape its inevitable conclusions through the weak subterfuge of claiming that the “rock” was not Peter, but Peter’s confession. For, if Jesus said these words, then he founded a Church and regarded the founding of a Church as his chief purpose in life. A Church is a self-perpetuating religious organism and an organism requires an organic life. A Church would therefore need a foundation stone, a head, a centre of authority, which could speak with the voice of God. If Jesus founded a Church, it was as reasonable that he should found it upon Peter and give him the absolute power of legislation as upon any one else, and more reasonable if Peter had been made the sole recipient of a divine revelation. It is therefore absolutely incumbent upon all who would be honest with themselves to ascertain

the truth upon this matter and, if it be proved that Jesus really did found a Church and that he was possessed of absolute divine power to found and equip it and had come into this world from a throne in heaven for this special purpose, to give themselves no rest until they have reached a sure conviction as to which among the historic claimants is the lineal descendant from the original foundation upon the "rock," and then, having discovered the Church, to submit without reserve to all the regulations of belief and morals, which, having been bound on earth by Peter and his successors, are bound in heaven. We may not decide so serious a question by means of our feelings, inclinations, tastes, habits, prejudices, or inherited beliefs, but only by bringing it before the cold and unimpassioned bar of historical investigation.

We may examine the witnesses in chronological order.

The first in point of time is Paul. In his Epistle to the Galatians he relates that, not long after his conversion, he went to Jerusalem to see Peter and that he spent two weeks with him, also that on that occasion he saw none of the other apostles, except James, the brother of Jesus. It is evident that, if Peter had received such a tremendous commission, with the power of the keys and authority to regulate all matters of belief, worship, and conduct, he would, during those two weeks have explained the matter to Paul, who, being duly impressed, would have bowed to the authority of Peter, humbly requesting for himself permission to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles and that, ever thereafter, he would have instructed his converts as to the unique and supreme position which Peter occupied in the Church. As we find him doing



nothing of the sort, the supposition is very strong that Peter had given him no such information.

On the contrary, in this same Epistle, Paul takes special pains to make it clear that he did not receive authority from Peter, nor from any one else, but declares that he is an apostle “not from man, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father.” Such language would have been impossible if Peter had been given supreme authority by Jesus and had informed Paul of the fact.

But Paul goes further. He says that fourteen years later he went to Jerusalem again, taking with him Barnabas and Titus. At this visit he finds that three men were “reputed to be pillars.”

If Jesus said these words to Peter, he said them in the presence of all the apostles and yet, more than twenty years later, none of the Christians in Jerusalem had heard of them, but, among them three, Peter, James, and John, seemed to be prominent, while of the three we know that it was James, not Peter, who enjoyed what precedence there was. Paul declared further that the three “pillars” (those who seemed to be somewhat) gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that they should go to the Gentiles, the Jerusalem Christians reserving for themselves the mission to the Jews. This is an undoubted historical fact and it throws much light upon the question under consideration. About thirty-five years after these supposed words of Jesus, the apostles themselves did not act upon them, which is very good evidence that they had never heard of them. It was not Peter, acting upon authority conferred on him by Jesus, who decided the question of a Christian mission among the pagans, but the three most prominent men among the

Christians in Jerusalem, who agreed to divide the field with Barnabas and Paul. None of those who came to this agreement could have heard that Jesus had said upon a most solemn occasion, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, etc."

Pursuing the study of history, we find that some of those who had made the agreement with Paul and Barnabas did not keep it; for James, having heard of the success which they were having in Antioch, sent thither some spies to ascertain whether "the law" were properly observed or not.

Before their arrival Peter had fallen into some of the new ways so far as to eat at the same table with Gentiles; but, on their arrival, knowing that this would bring him into trouble with James and the Christians generally in Jerusalem, withdrew and stopped eating with the Gentiles. This made Paul angry, so that he called Peter a coward in public and denounced him as a man without convictions. This very human narrative teaches us several things. If Peter had received from Jesus a commission as the head of the Church, with power to regulate everything on earth as with absolute divine authority, he would have settled the whole matter of eating with Gentiles, and all other matters upon which differences of opinion might arise, upon his own authority, as the supreme legislative power of the Church, and Paul and every one else would have been obliged to abide by his decision. He certainly would not have been afraid of James, and Paul would not have dared to withstand the vicegerent of Jesus. It is evident that Peter had not heard of his supposed commission. Again, when Paul heard that there were controversies in Corinth, if he had known of

Peter's selection as the “rock” on which the Church was founded, with the supreme right to govern, he certainly would have written to the troublesome Christians of that city: In all matters of controversy, refer to Peter and abide by his decision. On the contrary, he wrote, “Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” It is evident from his testimony that he knew nothing of Peter's supposed commission. Believing, as he did, that the work of Jesus was a work of emancipation and not the establishment of a new authority over belief and morals, he wrote to the Christians in Galatia: “With freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage.”

The next witness is Mark, who wrote his Gospel not long before the year 70 A.D., and who reflects therein the beliefs which were commonly held by the Christians at the end of the first Christian generation. He was well acquainted with Paul and, according to the statement of Papias, which is generally believed, also with Peter. He gave a circumstantial account of the event at Cæsarea Philippi, but it contains not the slightest suggestion of any commission, authority, or supremacy given to Peter. As there is very strong probability that he knew Peter intimately, he certainly would have known of his extraordinary position as the head of the Church, if any such office had been conferred upon him; but he knows nothing of it, neither does Luke, who, writing a generation later, made diligent investigation of all sources, both written and oral, as he states in his introduction, concerning the teaching and acts of Jesus. This makes it evident that, up to the year 100 A.D., no one among the Christians

had heard of any position of authority or supremacy which had been bestowed upon Peter.

But the most important witness in this matter is Jesus himself, as the memory of what he had said and done survived and has come down to us in the earliest written Gospel. The record is perfectly clear that the burden of his preaching and the source of his enthusiasm and devotion was the coming of the Kingdom of God, and we know perfectly well what this meant to him and to those who heard him. It meant that the evil affairs of this world had nearly finished their course, that the days of Satanic control were nearly over, that God himself would soon appear in the clouds to put an end to all wickedness, to judge and destroy the wicked, and to establish his personal rule and sovereignty in a regenerated and reconstructed Judaism. With this belief glowing in his heart and constituting the great motive power which controlled his actions, Jesus could not at the same time have held another belief so totally different from this as to amount to an entire denial of it. A "Church" is an organised religious life, with the necessary machinery for control and self-perpetuation. Jesus could not, therefore, have thought or spoken of himself as founding a Church, while he was occupied in proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God, for the latter was to come soon, at least within a generation, which made any permanent organisation superfluous. It was also to come suddenly, it might be "at even, at midnight, at cock-crowing, or in the morning," not through the machinery of any human organisation, but by the will of God, and men were not expected to organise, but were bidden to "watch." The ideas of a "Church" and the Kingdom of God are so mutually exclusive that to imagine for a moment

that Jesus thought of himself as the founder of a permanent religious institution would make it necessary to omit from the Gospel the entire record of what he believed and taught concerning the Kingdom of God. The unwillingness of Christians to face the alternative honestly and their attempt to escape it by pretending that the Kingdom of God is the Church is to befog the human mind and to belie the sober facts of history, while it puts Jesus into the impossible position of knowingly talking to the people in language which meant one thing to them and something totally different to himself. It is better to be true to ourselves, true to Jesus, and true to history, and, knowing what the Kingdom of God meant to him, to realise that the idea of a Church was entirely foreign to his mind and is due solely and altogether to the creative genius of Paul, who, in preaching a new religion to the greater world, found an organisation for the training and defence of his converts necessary and applied to that organisation the familiar Greek term *ecclesia*, of which Jesus had never heard.

Furthermore, Jesus is represented in this extraordinary passage, not only as speaking of founding a Church, but as conferring supreme power upon Peter, as the vicegerent of God, with the right to regulate everything pertaining to belief and morals and with the satisfaction of knowing that all his decisions would be ratified “in heaven.”

This is entirely contrary to the teaching of Jesus who, according to this same “Matthew,” instructed his disciples, “Call no man your father on earth; for one is your Father in heaven. Neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master (even the Christ). But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And who-

soever shall exalt himself will be humbled; and whosoever humbleth himself will be exalted." Having given the disciples this teaching, Jesus certainly did not exalt one of their number to a place of supremacy over the rest. Having endeavoured to teach these men the supremacy of conscience and the service of humanity as the highest duty, he did not turn right about and teach them to recognise the supremacy of a new hierarchy and the duty of conformity. This same "Matthew" relates that two of the disciples requested for themselves the places of highest honour in his Kingdom, which aroused the jealousy of the other disciples, but that Jesus made the request and consequent jealousy the occasion for serious instruction, saying to them: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority over them. *But it shall not be so among you;* but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your slave."

It is evident, therefore, both from the fact that no one among the Christians, at least before the year 100 A.D., had heard of any special position or authority given to Peter and that any such commission is entirely contrary to the belief and teaching of Jesus, that the three verses in question are nothing less than a deliberate forgery. The parties who were guilty of the forgery were no doubt those who profited by it and that was the Christians in Rome.

The very idea of a heavenly gatekeeper, armed with the power of the keys, was Roman and would never have occurred to Jesus, nor to any one sprung from the Semitic race, nor even to the Greeks, among whom it was the "Hours" who opened and shut the heavenly

doors. Among the Romans it was Janus who was believed to possess the “power of the keys” and was called “The Gatekeeper of the Heavenly Halls” (Ovid, *Fasti*, I., v., 137 ff.). He was represented with a staff in his right hand and keys in his left hand, precisely as is Peter who has succeeded and displaced him. The Romans did not kiss the feet of his statues, but the Sicilians kissed the feet of a statue of Hercules, as is related by Cicero, so that Peter has inherited the honour of Hercules, as well as the power of Janus. Nor was the kissing of the feet of statues unknown in pagan Rome, since the women kissed a foot of a statue of Isis, as they still kiss a foot of a statue of the Madonna del Parto in the Church of Sant’ Agostino. Paganism is continuous. Nothing is changed but the names.

But the Christians in Rome had other reasons for their forgery than the mere perpetuation of pagan ideas and customs, for they had acquired the Roman lust for power.

Early in the second century the confusion arising from the great number of discordant traditions, beliefs, practices, and written Gospels made it necessary to discover or devise some authority that should decide which Gospels should be read, what things were to be believed, what mode of worship observed, and what moral code established. Gradually it came to be recognised that such cities as could boast of an apostolic foundation could make a more valid claim than the rest to speak with authority on all such matters. Alexandria, Antioch, and Ephesus were the only cities which could make such a claim. It did not, however, suit the temper of the Christians in Rome to occupy a subordinate position to those who lived in provincial cities, for, although they were mostly foreigners, Jews,

Syrians, and Greeks, one could not live long in Rome without acquiring the spirit of Roman dominion. They would exercise an authority equal to or better than that of any city in the Empire and, instead of referring to others, men should inquire of them as to Christian belief and practice. Only one thing was lacking: Rome had no apostolic foundation. It was necessary to create one. There began to be rumours which grew rapidly into a legend and this, in a credulous and uncritical age, easily acquired credence, that Peter had been the actual founder of the Church in Rome and that, therefore, it possessed an authority equal to that of any city of the Empire. It soon laid claim to a greater authority. The question whether Peter was ever really in Rome or not will never be settled to the satisfaction of all, but, if he had been there in the earlier days before the coming of Paul there would be more certain evidence of the fact than the legend which connects him with Simon Magus, or the footprints of Jesus in the stone when he was turned back in his supposed flight from martyrdom. Furthermore, if he had suffered martyrdom in Rome, during the persecution under Nero, in the year 64 A.D., there would have been a festival commemorative of the fact during the month of August, in which that persecution took place. There is a "*Festum Petri ad Vincula*" on the first of August, but it has reference to the chains, still preserved and shown, said to have been acquired at Jerusalem in the fifth century by Eudolia, wife of Theodosius II, and to have been presented to the Church in Rome by her daughter Eudoxia, as evidence and mementoes of his imprisonment in Jerusalem. The only other festival which commemorates him in the Roman calendar is that of Peter and Paul on the



29th of June, in which the two supposed founders of the Roman Church have replaced Romulus and Remus, the more ancient reputed founders of the city itself. The claim, therefore, that Peter founded the Church in Rome rests upon nothing stronger than legend, but the use that was made of the legend proves its purpose. Rome would enjoy the dignity and authority of resting upon an apostolic foundation and, having established this claim, the Roman Christians went one step further and pretended that they were entitled to pre-eminence over all other churches, because Peter had been made supreme over the other apostles. Thus this iniquity was concocted and developed in the city which has profited by it ever since. The Gospel which bears the name of Matthew was undoubtedly compounded, altered, amended, and published in Rome, while its strong ecclesiastical tendencies show that it could not have been written until ecclesiasticism was well developed, therefore not in its present shape before the year 120 A.D.

This passage may have found its way into it then, or it may be of a still later date, after episcopacy, by supposed apostolic succession, had become an established fact, that is after the middle of the second century. Rome had no bishop until 167 A.D., but was governed by presbyters, with one of their number chosen to preside, nor any pope, with the claim of supremacy over other bishops, before the fifth century; nor did she win the battle for papal supremacy until the capture of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem by the Saracens had left her the undisputed mistress of the field.

These later iniquities, however, were contained as germs in the original forgery, which, when we consider the crimes which it has entailed and the power over

intelligence and conduct which it still puts into the hands of the various priesthoods, must be recognised as the most colossal and successful fraud ever perpetrated upon the human race and the source of more iniquity, oppression, and misery than anything ever concocted by the mind of man; for out of it have come the Papacy, the confessional, the inquisition, persecutions, Jesuitism, a frightful list of religious murders, and the organised warfare of a hierarchy against every step in the progress of mankind towards a knowledge of the truth which would make men free.

When we realise that these three verses have no place in the Gospel, the story of Jesus is delivered from one of its worst entanglements. He did not undertake to do so entirely incongruous a thing as to found a permanent institution in a world in which he believed that all existing institutions were soon to be swept away for ever and a new order of things established, under the immediate supervision of God. He did not found a Church, nor give any authority to Peter. Consequently none of the churches has the slightest shadow of a foundation for any of their claims to circumscribe the intelligence, to dictate the beliefs, or to prescribe the conduct of mankind, and the public must be informed that these verses are a forgery.

#### § XLV: *Mark ix, 2-13*

The account of the "Transfiguration" is given only by Mark and it would be interesting to know why the others omitted it. Quite probably it grew out of one of the "visions," which some of the followers of Jesus had, at some time after the crucifixion.

The suggestion that the three disciples were not to tell of it until after the resurrection makes this seem a reasonable explanation. Whether this be true, or not, the materials for its construction are evident enough. The early Jewish Christians imagined that law, prophets, and Gospel were to live together in happy harmony and this idea is expressed in the saying assigned to Peter, "It is good for us to be here," while the vanishing of Moses and Elias, followed by the voice, saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear him," represents the triumph of Pauline ideas. 2 Cor. iii-iv, 6.

The details for the story were abundantly supplied in the legend of Moses, Ex. xxiv. The six days, the three favoured friends, the light of the divine glory were all to be found in that ancient tale, while the whiteness of the garments, surpassing the brightness of the sun and the whiteness of the snow, came from the Apocalypse of Enoch.

As apologetics, the supposed transfiguration before three witnesses seemed to confirm the truth of Peter's recent declaration that Jesus was the Messiah and therefore to furnish the strongest evidence in favour of that belief, for the defence of which Mark wrote his Gospel. The statement that Jesus charged the disciples to tell no man what they had seen, until he was risen from the dead, shows that this whole account is an afterthought, the outgrowth of imagination and apologetics, without any historical foundation; for we learn from the subsequent history that the disciples did not expect any resurrection and were totally unprepared for the death of Jesus, which could not have been the case if he had impressed these things upon them, as is so often stated in the narrative.

§ XLVI: *Mark ix, 14-29; Luke ix, 37-42; Matt. xvii, 14-21*

That the legend of Moses supplied the details for the account of the "Transfiguration" is corroborated by this narrative, in which the ancient legend is still further drawn upon, (Ex. xxxii, 15 ff.); for as Moses, on coming down from Sinai, is said to have found the people lapsed into idolotry and holding a festival for the golden calf and to have been filled with wrath on that account, so Jesus, on coming down from the "high mountain," is said to have found the disciples so weak in faith that they could not heal an epileptic and to have been much grieved thereby. While Jesus undoubtedly healed epileptics, this particular case seems to have been imagined in order to carry out the parallelism with the Mosaic legend, and it is open to suspicion because he is made to say, in response to the question of the disciples as to why they could not heal the boy: "This kind cometh forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." This was contrary to the teaching of Jesus concerning fasting, for he had never taught that it was a means for acquiring spiritual power, nor that it constituted a claim upon God, as the Pharisees imagined, but only that it was the natural expression of grief. With him power was always the result of faith, and prayer was a means for developing faith by bringing one into a larger consciousness of the infinite life, but Mark is inconsistent in making Jesus suggest fasting as a source of power, for he had already made him say to the boy's father: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Luke omits this question and answer altogether, but Matthew makes the incongruity most evident. He

makes Jesus say, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it will remove; and nothing will be impossible unto you." Jesus undoubtedly said this on some occasion. He was speaking from his own experience and his absolute conviction that the power which was working in and through him was the power of God. There seemed to him to be no limit to what it would accomplish and he was sure that any one might acquire an equal power, if he would develop in his own soul a consciousness of God like his own. It is perfectly evident that, having assigned an unlimited power to faith, Jesus did not add that fasting was also necessary.

This "correction" of the teaching of Jesus on the part of the early Christians shows their inability to recognise what he meant by faith.

§ XLVII: *Mark ix, 30-32; Luke ix, 43-45; Matt. xvii, 22*

Jesus had determined upon the great undertaking of going to Jerusalem and the disciples had agreed to go with him. A long and dreary journey on foot of about a hundred miles lay before them, beset with dangers, if they ventured into the territory of Herod, while still greater perils awaited them in Jerusalem. In preparation for the journey it was necessary to return once more to Galilee, yet the risk which they incurred there compelled them to attract as little attention as possible and to hasten their departure.

In such quiet retreats as they found, Jesus undoubtedly tried to build up the courage of the disciples and to enlarge their faith in the final success of his mission. He did not disguise from himself nor from them the

possibility that he might lose his life and that some of them might lose their lives, but would have them strong in the belief that this would not prevent nor delay the coming of the Kingdom of God. He did not, however, tell them that he would certainly die, for this he did not expect, nor that he was going to Jerusalem for the purpose of dying, for he did not so interpret his mission. Therefore, all statements to the effect that he predicted his death and explained that it was in fulfilment of prophecy, or in obedience to God, or part of a divine plan, are later misinterpretations put back into the Gospel narrative and have not the slightest warrant in history. The entire later theory, that Jesus had been a suffering Messiah in order that he might become a heavenly Messiah, grew out of the visions of Jesus in glory and afforded the only means by which the early Jewish Christians could expect to convert other Jews to their belief that he was the Messiah. It would have added immeasurably to his anxiety and grief, had he foreseen the new Pharisaism which would hide away the reality of his faith and teaching.

§ XLVIII: *Mark ix, 33-50; Luke ix, 46-48; Matt. xviii,*

*I-II*

The disciples had become so much interested in the prospect of the immediate coming of the Kingdom of God that they had fallen to speculating as to what it would yield for them and had had some argument as to which of them would be the greatest, which shows not only that their anticipations were entirely materialistic, but also that the appointment of Peter to the highest place, as stated in Matthew's Gospel, is entirely without foundation.

Jesus, learning of the controversy, repeated the instruction, which he had often given them, that there was nothing arbitrary about the results of life, but that a man's value was in proportion to his service to those who needed it. Consequently, he was greatest who served his fellow-men best. Calling a child to him, he made of him an illustration of what he meant by service. The child was helpless and dependent and needed loving care and protection and, therefore, represented the great human multitude in need of help, sympathy, protection, guidance. He who helped best him who needed most would be the greatest in the Kingdom of God. Luke gives substantially the same account of the object of Jesus in using the child as an illustration, but nearly a generation later Matthew mistook the purpose of Jesus altogether. With him the child is no longer an illustration, but has become a model, with humility as the chief virtue to be copied. Matthew thought that Jesus was establishing the terms of admission to the Kingdom of God, which by his time had become identified with "the Church." One must acquire humility, which implied confidence, teachableness, plasticity, and "be converted," which implied the acceptance of dogmatic beliefs, as established by ecclesiastical authority. The spirit of ecclesiasticism had entirely obscured the teaching of Jesus, but is so charmingly hidden away behind pious phraseology as to have generally escaped notice. Matthew returns later to the interpretation as given by Mark because he finds that Mark has changed from the child used as an illustration to an instruction of Jesus concerning the attitude toward the little ones, that is the common people, who believe in him. This change in Mark's Gospel was brought about by a passage which broke

the connection and which is very interesting, because it gives us a glimpse into some of the results of the work of Jesus in Galilee of which there is no record. He had made so great an impression that the disciples had discovered a man who was healing in the name of Jesus. On the other hand, some of the people, misled by the Pharisees, had refused even to give a drink of water to the disciples of Jesus. This, therefore, seemed a fitting connection to bring in an instruction, which Jesus undoubtedly gave the disciples about this time. Woe unto the men who misled the little people who believed in him, as the Pharisees were doing. It would be better for such people if they were drowned in the Lake of Galilee. The disciples needed to be on their guard against the dangers, weaknesses, and temptations which came to them from their Pharisaic inheritance. Wrong habits, methods, ambitions, notions, beliefs must be torn out from their lives as completely as if their bodies had been disfigured by the loss of a hand, a foot, or an eye. They were preparing to enter into life, to become citizens in the Kingdom of God, and it would be better to enter with the loss of all that might cause them to offend than to lose life itself in the fire which would eradicate all evil before the Kingdom was established in power. As the garbage of Jerusalem was burned in the Valley of Hinnom, where the fire never went out and putrefaction was always present, so it would happen to the refuse of humanity when the coming judgment had separated it from the pure wheat of the Kingdom.

Jesus had not the mediæval notion of a perpetual hell-fire which burned without consuming, but anticipated such a complete destruction of wickedness that nothing but absolute goodness would be left for the Kingdom of God.



If the disciples would take the preparation for the Kingdom so seriously as to cast out everything that was wrong from their lives in habit or belief they would not be among those who misled the little ones who believed in him.

Matthew closes this account by making Jesus give as a reason why they should not mislead "the little ones" that "in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven."

Jesus quite probably held the belief in guardian angels, which the Jews had acquired from long contact with the Persians, but these words reflect rather the confused beliefs of Jewish Christians than any actual words of his; for one would think that guardian angels would be able to protect their wards against "offences" and would hardly speak of their wards as "lost."

LUKE'S ACCOUNT OF THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM—

LUKE ix, 51-xviii, 14

*Luke ix, 51-55*

It is necessary at this point to break the study of Mark's Gospel and to examine the collection of narratives which Luke gathered from many sources and arranged as details of the journey to Jerusalem. While most if not all of the narratives undoubtedly represent actual events in the life of Jesus, or genuine sayings of his, the setting which Luke provided for them is due to his literary genius and cannot be considered historical. In fact, the journey to Jerusalem, as he describes it, is altogether improbable at this time, but it may be that there was a journey through Samaria in some earlier year, some traditions of which Luke confused with this account. Two routes were possible: either through Peræa by way of Jericho, or through Samaria by way of Shechem. Mark gives the first route and Luke the second, which, however, necessitates a long detour from Shechem, in order to connect with Mark's narrative at Jericho.

The route given by Mark would be much the safer of the two, since it would avoid both Galilee and Samaria. In Galilee there was constant danger from Herod Antipas and, although most of the Galilean pilgrims to the Passover did go through Samaria, it was not without frequent and sometimes bloody encounters

with the Samaritans, who, being excluded as pagans from all but the outer court of the temple, hated the Jews accordingly.

As Jesus and the disciples were already in Galilee, it would be much easier to take the route through Samaria than to cross the lake again and begin the journey from the other side. It is possible that a solution of the discrepancy may be found in a statement in Luke's Gospel of hostility which Jesus encountered in Samaria, and that on that account he and the disciples, having begun their journey by that route, turned back and took the other one, or, as already stated, there may have been a journey through Samaria at another time.

Luke, in introducing the new material into the narrative, prefaces it with a statement, ix, 51, which shows an unfortunate theological bias. "And it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."

If this be a true interpretation, the only virtue which Jesus possessed was his willingness to be the victim of a divine plan which, being a divine plan, would be carried out whether he were willing or not; but it robs him of all individuality, originality, noble ideality, grand devotion, and manly courage, and it has been a colossal misfortune for the Christian world that the real Jesus has been so long hidden away behind the distorted picture of dogmatic delusion.

It is time that men, brushing away the cobwebs of old speculations, should realise that this world is not the puppet of divine decrees, nor the football of inexorable fate, but the divine arena on which the conscious sons of God, in the free exercise of heart and head,

learn to interpret the noblest duties of life as the glad doing of their Father's will.

Then the faith, hope, and love, the devotion and courage of Jesus will shine as the brightest spots upon the canvas of human history, and he will become the leader of a greater host than in all the ages of Christian history devoted to the supreme service of humanity, which is the actual doing of the will of God.

*Luke ix, 57-62; Matt. viii, 19-22*

There were certainly some who went from Galilee with Jesus besides the disciples, men who had been willing to renounce everything and were willing to risk everything. Others probably joined them on the way, while some, who would have done so, shrank from the dangers. Luke discovered traditions of three cases and how Jesus dealt with them (ix, 57 ff.).

To one who said that he would go with him whithersoever he went, Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and the birds of heaven have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." This was very different from his strengthening of the disciples' faith by telling them that the very hairs of their head were numbered and that they were of more value than many sparrows. The latter was to encourage men who were already committed to his cause, while what he said to the new applicant was intended as a warning. He would take no followers without a full understanding on their part as to what they might expect. Another man would join in the attack upon Jerusalem if he might first attend his father's funeral, but Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and publish abroad the Kingdom of God."

There were enough, according to the thought of Jesus, who did not believe his message to attend to the ordinary duties of life, but a man whose soul was on fire with the prospect of the near coming of the Kingdom of God had no time to spare, even to bury his father. When the Kingdom comes and the resurrection takes place he will see his father again, if he is worthy to become a citizen, meanwhile there are thousands who may be lost, thousands who might be saved, if some one would only go and tell them that the Kingdom was certainly coming.

A man who believed the message, so Jesus felt, could not help doing this and could not be kept from it even by the closest ties of filial love and duty.

The same was true of the man who wanted first to go and bid farewell to the friends at home. It did not seem to Jesus that he took the matter seriously enough. If he had really once put his hand to the plough and was ploughing a furrow to prepare for the coming of the Kingdom of God, he could not possibly think of dropping it and taking a leave of absence to go and bid good-bye to his friends. The Kingdom was everything and time was short and one was not fit for it if he let anything interfere with his complete devotion to it.

These three incidents show the intensity of the convictions and feelings of Jesus and how very real the immediate coming of the Kingdom was to him.

It ought to be evident to every one that what he said to these men, who undoubtedly represent many applicants, as well as many other things which he is reported as saying on the way to Jerusalem, were applicable only to that great undertaking and its serious exigencies and that they cannot be construed into permanent and universal rules for life. The failure to recognise

so simple an historical fact has led to much unfortunate blundering.

*Luke x, 1-12*

Luke had already given the account of the sending out of the twelve on a preaching tour in Galilee, as he found it in Mark's Gospel. Here he introduces an account of the sending out of a large company, as many as seventy, to preach, ostensibly in Samaria, although, according to the tradition of the earlier instruction, given in Matthew's Gospel, and which is undoubtedly authentic, Jesus had said to the disciples, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." There is no apparent reason why he should have so entirely changed his attitude, his purpose, and his interpretation of his work as is here implied, nor, while under the intense pressure which urged him forward to Jerusalem, could he have brought himself to rest quietly by the way, awaiting the results of a great mission among the cities of Samaria.

It is evident that Luke has mistaken the work of later Jewish Christians for an actual event during the time of Jesus, and that his mistake afforded the convenient opportunity for illustrating the Pauline idea that the teaching of Jesus constituted a new religion for the world and that Jesus himself had established a world-wide mission. This is implied not only by the fact that these missionaries were supposed to be in Samaria and that the Samaritans counted as pagans with the Jews, but also in the number seventy, which passed among the Jews as representing all the nations of the earth. They had a legend, which related that the law

was proclaimed from Mt. Sinai in seventy languages, and another which told that the version of their Scriptures into Greek was made by seventy men working independently of each other and yet so entirely under divine control that their translations agreed to a word.

The suggestion that "the labourer is worthy of his hire" is Pauline, (1 Cor. ix, 14), as is also the instruction, "eat such things as are set before you." This refers to the troublesome question about meat offered to idols, which could occur only amid the conditions of life among the pagans. The supposed saying of Jesus that the missionaries whom he was sending out were going forth as sheep among wolves was accurately expressive of later circumstances, when the preachers of the new religion did suffer persecution, but could not apply to the original twelve whom Jesus sent out in joy and hope to preach the Gospel, heal the sick, and cast out devils in Galilee.

It is evident, therefore, that the supposed sending of the seventy is partly an anachronism and partly an allegory on the part of Luke and is to be omitted as unhistorical from an attempt to discover the true story of Jesus. Matthew found the two accounts of the sending of the twelve and the sending of the seventy and confused them in a single narrative of the sending of the twelve (Mt. ix, 35-x, 25).

*Luke x, 13-24; Matt. xi, 20-27*

It is rather remarkable that the earlier Gospel contained no account of the return of the twelve from their mission and of the results which they had accomplished, and it is quite possible that Luke, finding such a tradition, recorded it in his account of the return of the

supposed seventy. They are said to have returned with joy that the devils were subject to them in the name of Jesus. The original twelve undoubtedly returned with joy, but, as the details of their report had been lost, most of such details as are given must be due to the inventive genius of Luke. Jesus had possibly developed in them the power to heal nervous diseases, but certainly in no other way than that in which he healed them, that is, by the power of faith; but a later generation, lacking the spiritual power, had imagined them healing diseases by using the name of Jesus to conjure with, which virtually reduced the healings to a magical basis and is altogether impossible. Jesus undoubtedly recognised the results of their work, as he did those of his own, as harbingers of the coming of the Kingdom of God and sure evidences of the speedy dethronement of Satan. He would naturally express his belief in the inevitable victory of God, and, in the way familiar to the people of Palestine, as the victory of God over the Devil.

The idea of a divine struggle against a vast power of evil, known as "the dragon," or leviathan, or, in later times, as Satan, had been inherited from very ancient Semitic mythology and found expression in a popular Jewish Apocalypse, in the time of Jesus, in the form in which it is given in the Book of Revelation (xii, 7-9.). Jesus would naturally express his belief in the coming victory in the popular language of the day, declaring that he already foresaw the time when Satan would be cast down from his high estate, with the certainty of eventually losing his power over this world. Those who to-day believe also in the inevitableness of the victory of good over evil do not find it necessary to express that belief in the forms of ancient mythology.



The faith of Jesus is sublime and eternal, but the forms in which it had to express itself nearly two thousand years ago were temporary and transient.

He is said to have told them that their real cause for joy was not to be found in their power over diseases, but in the fact that their names were written in heaven, in other words, that they had become so far emancipated from the superficial and mechanical life of the multitude and had made such growth in the moral and spiritual life that they had virtually already passed the judgment and had proved their worthiness for citizenship in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus undoubtedly thanked God for the slightest evidence which these men gave of any reality of faith and any insight into spiritual things. Luke assigns to him, when the disciples return from their missionary work, a magnificent hymn of victory:

I thank thee, Father,  
 Lord of heaven and earth,  
 That thou hast hidden from the prudent and the wise,  
 And hast revealed to babes  
     Thy truth.

Yea, Father,  
 For so it pleased thee.

All things are given  
 Of my Father unto me,  
 And no one but the Father knows the Son  
 And none the Father, but the Son,  
 And he to whom the Son  
     Reveals him.

It is a beautiful hymn, but it is impossible to think for a moment that the last six lines can have come from

Jesus, who is nowhere else in the Synoptic Gospels represented as breaking forth into the language of the dogmatic theology of a later generation. The ideas and the language are Pauline, so much so that in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, (i, 19-31), there may be found ten words and expressions suggestive of the ideas of this passage, while the supremacy of Jesus, as the Messiah, is set forth in 1 Cor. xv, 27. Jesus always proclaimed the Kingdom of God and portrayed the character which would entitle one to citizenship. He had no speculative dogmas, dealt in no mysteries, and did not believe that any one was prevented by divine decree from believing his message.

Jesus no doubt on this, or some similar occasion, impressed upon the disciples an additional cause for rejoicing. Not only were they sure of admission to the Kingdom, but they were living at the very epoch of its coming. Many prophets and kings had longed to see the things which they saw and had not seen them, but they could see the signs of its coming multiplying so fast that they might expect its advent in the clouds at any time.

*Luke x, 25-37*

In relating the story of the scribe, who asked what he should do to inherit eternal life, which he found in the earlier Gospel, Luke transposed the parts, in order to make the scribe, whom he calls a lawyer, ask the question, "Who is my neighbour?" and this gave him an opportunity for telling the story of the Good Samaritan, which he alone relates. The story was undoubtedly told in Jerusalem and not on the way thither, and its teaching was extraordinary for the people of that

city to hear, since it illustrated unmistakably the sad effect of religious bigotry in stifling the natural sympathy of the human heart. A man had fallen among thieves, who had robbed and wounded him and left him half dead. A priest and a Levite saw him and passed by on the other side. The man might not be a Jew and so would be nothing to them. If a Jew, he probably did not keep the law and they would contaminate their sanctity by coming near him. It was certainly safer to keep on the other side. But there came a Samaritan that way, a man excluded from the worship of God in Jerusalem. He saw a man in distress and was sorry for him and, not stopping to ask about his race, religion, or orthodoxy, he cared for him, devoting thought, time, and money to help him. Such was the answer of Jesus to the question, "Who is my neighbour?" Every one who needs your help, regardless of everything but that one fact, is your neighbor. It was but an illustration of his constant teaching that the service of humanity was the greatest object in human life, because it was a real doing of the will of God and therefore a foretaste of life in the Kingdom of God soon to be realised. The story shows the clear intuitions of Jesus as to the normal growth of humanity when once set free from its prejudices. It was religious prejudice which made the priest and Levite inhuman, while the saying of Jesus, "Go and do thou likewise," has been heard in the human heart for nearly nineteen centuries and, despite all obstacles, has been doing a patient, persistent work in making his ideal an ever grander reality in the life of the nations.

As regards the English version, it is a misfortune that the translators used the words "two pence." The amount given in the story is equal to about thirty-

four cents, although this is quite irrelevant. It would have been much better translated, "And on the morrow he took out *some money* and gave it to the host.'

*Luke x, 38-42*

In Luke's account of "a certain village" where Jesus and his company were entertained by two sisters, there is a touch of human nature which is quite realistic. Tradition afterwards identified the village with Bethany, about three miles from Jerusalem, to which Jesus retired several nights during the last week. The company, including the women who came from Galilee and others who joined on the way, numbered at least twenty. To find accommodation in the small houses of a Judæan village and to provide food for so many was no small task. The burden fell upon Martha, while Mary devoted herself to listening to Jesus. Martha became tired and finally irritated at having to do all the work and appealed to Jesus to make Mary help her, but Jesus assured her that she was taking too much trouble. A little would suffice, anything would do. Mary was wise to listen to the good news of the Kingdom and he could not deny her the joy. It is another illustration of how his absorption in his work and his enthusiasm over the prospects made him often oblivious of physical needs and the necessity of providing for them.

*Luke xi, 1-13*

Luke relates that after Jesus had been praying, on one occasion, one of the disciples said to him—"Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." Jesus

lived, as no one ever did before or since, in the clear and constant consciousness of God and often entered into intimate intercourse with him, as the source of his faith, hope, and courage. One could not imagine him repeating fixed formulas of prayer.

According to the earliest Gospel, his teaching on the subject was (Mark xi, 24, 25): "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them and ye will have them. And, whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also, which is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses."

A generation later there was a tradition that Jesus had given the disciples a fixed prayer. It is possible that he did. At least its petitions are in accordance with his teaching. But it is also possible, from the mention of John the Baptist, that the formula grew out of the desire of the Christians to have a like equipment with the disciples of the latter. We cannot tell, but the enlargement in Matthew's Gospel shows that there was no certain tradition on the subject, while so important a fact could hardly have escaped the knowledge of Mark.

According to Luke the prayer was very short:

Father,  
     Hallowed be thy name.  
 Thy Kingdom come.  
     Give us needful bread daily.  
 And forgive us our sins;  
     (For we also forgive every one, who is indebted to us).  
 And lead us not into temptation.

Matthew (vi, 9) enlarged it to:

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.

Give us needful bread to-day.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

But deliver us from evil.

The doxology, as given in Matthew's Gospel, was supplied from the later liturgical usage of the Church. In comparing the two versions of the prayer, the beginning in Luke's version is the more probable. "Father" was the natural expression of Jesus in appealing to God, since he was always conscious of the presence of God; whereas "Our Father, who art in heaven" suggests rather the popular Jewish idea of a distant God, removed from the world.

Matthew's version enlarges the prayer by repeating two of the petitions in other words. "Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven" means the same as "Thy Kingdom come," and "Deliver us from evil" means the same as "Lead us not into temptation." Matthew was infatuated with the number seven and imagined that all things in the world fell naturally into groups of seven, whether it were genealogy, parables, or prayers. He wrote his Gospel on this theory, and no doubt added the two petitions to the prayer to make it conform to his theory. As regards the prayer itself, the first two petitions were familiar to all Jews from the synagogue service, while the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," would mean more among the disciples of Jesus than to other Jews from the intensity of their conviction that the "coming" was close at hand.

The word translated "needful" in the petition,

"Give us needful bread daily," or, as Matthew says, "Give us needful bread to-day," will never be satisfactorily translated, because no one knows the meaning of the word. Jerome is authority for the statement that the Gospel of the Hebrews contained the word "to-morrow," making the petition read, "Give us to-day to-morrow's bread," and yet the wisest guess so far made suggests "needful," "necessary," or "sufficient," as a reasonable translation.

The wonderfulness of the prayer as a whole is that in the fewest possible words it covers the whole ground of prayer. On the basis of the general petition for the world, that God may be known, worshipped, and served and his personal reign be established, rests the recognition of our personal dependence and our prayer for the continued sustenance of life. Then, the physical foundation of life being provided for, there follows the prayer for the moral superstructure, that we may be forgiven the evil of the past and strengthened by the divine life against evil in the future. The reason, too, is expressed why we may hope to be forgiven. It is because we have forgiven those who have done evil to us. This is the certain and positive teaching of Jesus, but it has often been and still is set aside by theology, in favour of the theory that the divine forgiveness depends upon our holding "right views" of the atonement. This is one of the many ways in which the persistent "leaven of the Pharisees" has supplanted the direct teaching of Jesus.

The necessity of forgiving as a ground of being forgiven was the result of profound psychological intuition on the part of Jesus; for, while one experiences the evil thoughts which grow out of an unforgiving state of mind, one cannot appreciate nor acquire the peace of God which follows emancipation from an evil act

or habit. Nor can one properly expect for himself what he is unwilling to bestow upon others.

The examination of this prayer compels us to believe, on account of its simplicity, its comprehensiveness, and the moral and spiritual conditions which it presupposes, that it must have originated with Jesus, and in the simpler form as given by Luke, notwithstanding the fact that it was overlooked by the writer of the earlier Gospel. And yet, if Jesus actually gave the disciples a formulated prayer, he never for an instant thought of prayer as the ceaseless repetition of a formula, as if the fixed words possessed a magical efficacy and exercised a compelling power upon God; for prayer with him was not an observance, but a constant mental attitude. This he illustrated in the story, the point of which was importunity. What one desired with such intensity that he never for a moment stopped asking for it, he would be sure to get.

Jesus always taught these great truths not theoretically, but as the result of his own experience and, therefore, he could assure his disciples, "Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it will be opened." And then he taught the reasonableness of this belief. Men, who were not perfect, naturally did the best they knew how by their children and, therefore, God, who was perfect, would just as naturally do his infinite best for his children, by giving them the stimulus and power for the higher development and growth. The only conditions were the constant asking based on intense desire. On these conditions, the result of prayer was inevitable. Jesus spoke from faith and experience, but his teaching anticipated the psychology of prayer by more than nineteen centuries.



*Luke xi, 14-36; Matt. xii, 22-45*

Luke introduces into his long narrative of the supposed journey through Samaria accounts which have no connection with one another as regards time and place, some of which belong in or near Jerusalem, others in Galilee. The account of the claim of the Pharisees that Jesus was casting out devils by the aid of Satan belonged in Galilee and is given by Mark at the proper place. Luke suppressed it in copying Mark's narrative and gave it here from another source. He assigns the notion to the people generally, whereas it was undoubtedly a device of the Pharisees to discredit Jesus with the multitude.

The demand for a "sign" also belonged to another period of the Galilean ministry. (Mark viii, 11.)

Verses 24 to 26 have no connection with what precedes or follows and contain neither instruction, warning, nor encouragement, but record the fact that cures of insanity were sometimes only temporary quietings, while the return of violence would be popularly explained by the notion that the victim had willingly admitted more devils than before. This might suggest that a man delivered from the dominion of passions and evil habits fell to a lower depth of immorality if he yielded to temptation; but, as the teaching of Jesus

was always brought out by individual cases, it is hardly probable that this can have come from him.

Luke found in Mark's Gospel, in connection with the charge that he cast out devils with the help of the prince of devils, the account of the coming of the mother and brothers of Jesus to take him home by force (Mark. iii, 31), together with the saying of Jesus, as he turned to his disciples, "these are my mother and my brethren." This account he entirely obliterates with his story of a woman, who cried out, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck," and the answer of Jesus, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." By the time when Luke wrote, the Christians had willingly forgotten the prejudice of the family of Jesus against him and remembered only that his mother had been a devotee in Jerusalem and his brother James the head of the Christian organisation. Sentiment had already obscured history.

Verses 29 to 32 are an enlargement upon the original fact, as stated by Mark, (viii, 11.) It was commonly believed that the Messiah would work greater miracles than any related in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Pharisees, in order to discredit Jesus with the multitude, demanded a miracle and he had replied that there would be no miracle. The Christians, afterwards, believing as the Pharisees did, that the Messiah must give some great sign in attestation of his Messiahship, could not help adding the words, "but the sign of Jonah," meaning thereby that the physical resurrection of Jesus, which was part of the later belief, was the overwhelming evidence that he was the Messiah.

Luke found among the traditions this popular addition to the words of Jesus, but he did not see the point.

The people of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. The Queen of Sheba took a long journey to profit by the wisdom of Solomon. They would both condemn this generation for not recognising one greater than Jonah or Solomon, that is, the Messiah, but such a condemnation could not be called "the sign of Jonah" and Luke had forgotten that Jesus had forbidden the disciples to tell any one of their belief that he was the Messiah. The generation could not be condemned for not knowing what he wished to keep hidden. Luke was confused and missed the point altogether. Matthew, (xii, 40,) afterwards brought it out distinctly. "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

This, then, was to be the "sign" such as the Pharisees demanded in proof that Jesus was the Messiah. It was the "sign" upon which the Jewish Christians relied for converting their fellow countrymen to their belief. The account, as given in Matthew's Gospel, records the state of belief and methods of propagandism early in the second century, but not the belief or words of Jesus.

*Luke xi, 37-54; Matt. xxiii*

This denunciation of the Pharisees could have been delivered only in Jerusalem, certainly not in Samaria, where there were no Pharisees, and hardly in the house of a Pharisee, where Jesus was the guest of honour.

*Luke xii, 1-12; Matt. x, 26-33, 17-20*

This is a record which belongs to the days in Galilee,

when Jesus had warned the disciples against the beliefs, attitude, and spirit of the Pharisees, all included under the term "leaven," and had bidden them not to consider his teaching as a private treasure of their own, but to proclaim it everywhere, regardless of consequences, not fearing men but the punishment of God if they neglected their duty, yet always sure of the protection of God if they did their duty. To strengthen their confidence still more, he assured them that those who acknowledged him before men, the Son of man, the Messiah, would acknowledge at the judgment. He does not identify himself with the Messiah, while, by "confessing" him before men, he does not mean holding certain views, opinions, or beliefs about him, but he means believing his message, his Gospel, the good news that the Kingdom was coming. That was what he always asked of men, to believe the Gospel, to believe him as the bringer of the message. He did not care what men believed about him personally. His whole concern was that they should believe his message.

The eleventh verse is a reminiscence of later missionary activities, when the preachers of a new belief were in danger from both Jews and pagans. The teaching cannot have come from Jesus, who anticipated no such conditions, but always expected that the Kingdom of God would come during the life of the generation then living. Luke found this in Mark's eschatological chapter, (Mk. xiii) and possibly in other sources and traditions, but was unable to realise that a new religion for the world, such as was being preached in his day, was totally foreign to the thought of Jesus.

*Luke xii, 13-21*

Many events in the life of Jesus and isolated sayings

of his floated down the stream of tradition and were eventually woven together into a continuous narrative, but without any real connection. It is so here. The event undoubtedly happened, the saying and the parable are undoubtedly genuine, but they do not belong together.

A man in the crowd, on one occasion in Galilee, appealed to Jesus to compel his brother to divide the inheritance with him. The Jews had no law but the so-called law of Moses and controversies were settled by the religious authorities, not by civil courts. It is still largely the custom in the Orient under the Mohammedan religion. The man who appealed to Jesus did so because he recognised him as a prophet, or thought that he might be the Messiah. But Jesus repudiated the appeal with the words: "Man, who made me a judge, or a divider over you?" In other words, I am not the Messiah and therefore have no jurisdiction in the case. This is a direct repudiation of Messiahship on the part of Jesus, which has been generally overlooked.

The warning against covetousness is undoubtedly genuine, but does not belong in this connection, for there is nothing in the brief narrative to show that the man was covetous, but only that he was seeking justice. He was entitled to his share of the inheritance and was being kept out of it by his brother. He thought that his brother would be obliged to respect a decision by the Messiah.

In warning against the great desire for material things as the chief source of happiness, Jesus enunciated one of the great principles, which made his teaching immortal. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." As with

all the other great truths, which he declared, this came out of his own experience. He knew the depth and power and joy of life itself, the soul life, with its unlimited capacities for knowing, feeling, loving, and serving. In comparison with its infinitude of joy, the ordinary human ideal, which made material possessions the great source of happiness, dwindles away to nothing. He was not recommending asceticism, but declaring a principle which had grown out of his experience, that the source of happiness was in life itself and its unlimited wealth of capacities, and not in external things.

There follows, (v. 16,) a parable, not connected with what precedes, but with what follows.

A rich farmer had a great crop and no place to put it. He therefore built larger barns which, when filled with grain, gave him much pleasure as he looked forward to many years of comfort and plenty; but no sooner were the new barns finished than he died.

A parable is an illustration of a single truth, and the truth which this one illustrates must have to do with special circumstances and emergencies and can never have been intended to be of general application, for otherwise it would seem to teach that a man who had too large a crop for his accommodations would do well to let the surplus go to ruin on the ground, lest God should be jealous of his prosperity and want his soul. This is the interpretation which ignorant and superstitious people in all the Christian ages have put upon it, and thousands of men have been afraid to build a new house, but have altered and enlarged an old one whenever they pleased, lest a new one should be the cause of their death.

The parable constituted part of the warning and instruction to the disciples and others who were

willing to go with Jesus on the perilous journey to Jerusalem. They were obliged to break away from everything in their former life, whether it were fishing, or farming, or whatever it might be, and have no interests left behind them, because the Kingdom of God, putting an end to all existing conditions, was coming, and coming very soon. If they held back from the great undertaking of preparing the way for it and clung to their property and material occupations, they would be like a farmer who built new barns for his harvest, but died without enjoying his prosperity, for the Kingdom would come, and in the preceding judgment they and their property and their business would all be swept away together. Thus the parable acquires its place in history and serves to illustrate the intensity of devotion and enthusiasm with which Jesus and his friends undertook the journey to Jerusalem.

*Luke xii, 22-31; Matt. vi, 25-33*

The extraordinary teaching contained in the rest of this and part of the following chapter, and incorrectly incorporated by Matthew in the so-called "Sermon on the Mount," has been entirely misunderstood, with most unfortunate consequences.

On the supposition that Jesus was consciously founding a new religion for the world, with a Church as the organic form of its life, it has been taken for granted that in this teaching he was laying down rules for the perpetual guidance of its members; but, as experience has shown the impracticability of such a standard of conduct on any large scale, it has been claimed by some that the religion of Jesus sets forth visionary and impossible ideals, and by others that he made the

standards high in order to lead the world to struggle gradually up to them. For centuries the problem of an impossible ideality seemed to be solved by assuming that monasticism was the only really religious life, while penances and indulgences made good the deficit for the multitude. Among Protestants there has always been a feeling of sub-conscious hypocrisy, in that they accepted a standard of conduct which they made no effort to attain. All this unfortunate blundering might have been saved by a very little realisation of the facts of history. Jesus was not thinking of a religion for the world, nor of rules and principles for humanity at large. He was going to Jerusalem to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God, than which a bolder project was never conceived nor executed. He had persuaded his disciples to go with him, with the sacrifice of everything at the start and the certainty of peril at the end of the journey. It was necessary to equip these men with unconquerable courage, with absolute faith, with overwhelming enthusiasm. They were to leave everything behind them, to take nothing with them, and to set out with nothing but their faith in God to lay siege to the stronghold of an ancient religion, a rich and powerful hierarchy, and an orthodoxy barricaded behind mountains and centuries of authorities. There is no romance in all the annals of chivalry equal to that of the little flock which set out from Galilee nearly nineteen centuries ago to inherit the vineyard of God.

Many questions arose before their departure. They sold their boats, their little fields, their houses. What should they do with the proceeds; take them with them? Jesus said, No! Give it all away. "Sell that ye have and give alms; make for yourselves purses which wax



not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth." They were to take neither money, nor extra baggage, nor to have any anxiety about property left behind them. But some of them said, shall we not need money by the way to buy food, or perhaps clothes? But Jesus said: "Do not be anxious for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. For the life is more than the food and the body than the raiment. Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them; of how much more value are ye than the birds? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his stature? If ye then are not able to do even that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them. But, if God doth so clothe the grass in the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. Howbeit seek ye his Kingdom and these things will be added unto you. Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." It is wonderful how these words come to life, when we see Jesus and his disciples in some obscure corner of pagan territory and listen as he tries to mould those men into heroes and to kindle the fire of a sublime devotion in their souls. And can there be any doubt but that these words were addressed to them alone

and for the one great purpose of developing in them heroic faith and courage? The words, "how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith" and "Fear not, little flock" are evidence enough.

These men, who were doing the work of God, were to trust God and therefore were to set forth, not only without money or encumbrance, but without the least anxiety. They were of more value than the birds, and their Heavenly Father knew that they needed food and clothes. They were to have but one thought, one goal, one interest in life and that was his Kingdom—his actual coming to establish his personal reign on earth and all the things that they needed would be provided for them. They had still greater cause for proceeding on their great undertaking without fear, for it was their Father's good pleasure to give them the Kingdom.

When it came, they who had been instrumental in its coming would have a grand share both in its material comforts and its spiritual joy. Therefore, by selling their property and giving away the proceeds, their treasure would be imperishable in that divine Kingdom, established in this world and extending into the heavens. If they kept their property, they would still be interested in it. They must give it all away, that their treasure might be wholly in the coming Kingdom and then every interest in life would be there also.

Thus we find that, in interpreting the Gospel narrative by the light of history, not only do we gain a better realisation of the special training of the disciples for their colossal undertaking, but we learn that Jesus did not establish impossible standards for all men in all ages, that monasticism is not the normal result of his teaching, nor a thinly-veiled hypocrisy a possible outcome. And yet, while this teaching was for the

disciples and was a means for equipping them for their great undertaking, there have been thousands of men, in all subsequent ages, who, under the pressure of a grand ideal, have faced a similar crisis and been led to make like sacrifices, finding courage in the words of Jesus and learning from him a larger faith in God, since, because they were working for divine purposes, they were of more value than the birds.

*Luke xii, 32-40*

The ideality which led these men on was stronger than the sacrifices which they made and the dangers which they were to encounter; for, after the struggle, they were sure of victory. It was their Father's good pleasure to give them the Kingdom. They were to set forth, therefore, without fear, with the sound of victory already ringing in their hearts. What mattered the giving away of their property? When the reign of God was established, there would be treasure enough for those who had helped to bring it about, an eternal treasure, which could never be stolen, nor destroyed. They were to set out, therefore, in the spirit of intense expectancy, as it were in light marching order by day, their lanterns burning at night, their loins girded, like men who were expecting their lord's return from a marriage feast whither he had gone. When he came, whether in the second, or the third watch of the night, he would make a feast and serve them. They were to keep on the watch, with as much interest as a man who was protecting his property against thieves. If he had known that the thief was really coming he would have watched and not have let his house be broken into. They knew that the Kingdom was coming and,

therefore, they must not cease their expectancy for an instant, but be always ready, for in an hour that they thought not the Son of man would come.

The "Son of Man" here means the Messiah and Jesus is represented as speaking of him as entirely distinct from himself, and as a symbol in accordance with the Book of Daniel, not as a person. Such is the spirit of exalted enthusiasm in which the disciples set out to accompany him to Jerusalem. They were going to witness the end of an epoch in Jewish history and the beginning of a new one in which they were to share and which at any instant might break through the clouds. This is very different from the later belief that a sad and dazed company of men went mournfully to Jerusalem because Jesus had told them that he was going there to die.

*Luke xii, 41-49; Matt. xxiv 45-51*

The distinction between different strata of belief was not clear in the early Christian day, nor, in fact, has it been since, until quite recently, and yet there is a faint suggestion of such a consciousness in the question which Luke assigns to Peter, "Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all," for, while what follows is undoubtedly based upon what had been teachings of Jesus, in its present form it applies neither to the disciples nor to other friends of Jesus in his day, but represents the attitude and belief of a later Christian generation. There were then congregations with stewards over them appointed to instruct them in the Gospel. The original duties of readiness and expectancy were still uppermost, but now the expectation of a second coming of Jesus as the Messiah, with power

and glory, was the Christian belief. The servant whom his Lord when he came found properly preparing the people for his coming would be rewarded with a large dominion, while the servant who, because the coming was delayed, had begun to abuse his trust would be cast out, to suffer the fate of the unchristian world. He who knew better would be punished severely, while he who erred through ignorance would receive a light punishment, because, as Jesus undoubtedly taught, the judgment upon life would be in exact proportion to the gifts bestowed.

*Luke xii, 49-53; Matt. x, 34, 35*

The narrative returns to Jesus and his disciples, before the journey to Jerusalem. They had been assured of victory in their great undertaking and yet they would have no triumphal journey, for they were going to certain conflict and suffering and Jesus assured them that the result of his work among men would be to set the world on fire, the little world of Judaism, which was the only world they knew, to set it on fire by stirring up the most intense passions of the human heart, the bitterness and hatred of religious strife. They were to try to transform men into fitness for citizenship in the Kingdom of God and would thus be brought into conflict with venerable beliefs and long-established customs, for the new religious equipment anticipated nothing less than the substitution of conscience for law, the spontaneity of goodness for the keeping of rules, the responsibility of moral judgment for all external conformities, the right of personal access to God without the intervention of a priesthood, the reality of forgiveness without payment in the form

of sacrifice, the right and duty of thinking instead of accepting the petrified thoughts of a theological coterie.

All this was wrapped up in the purpose of Jesus to go to Jerusalem, the germ of the age-long struggle of the human race for emancipation, growth, attainment, and power and the consequent kindling of the fire which has been burning ever since, breaking out with new intensity ever and again, as the centuries go by, as in the work of Paul and Luther, in the French Revolution, in the Declaration of American Independence, and in the divine unrest of the present day.

The consequences of his work have been infinitely greater than he knew, for every step in the emancipation of mankind from the barrenness of mechanical religion and the deadness of the letter is a preparation, not for a Kingdom of God established in Jerusalem, but for an eternal Kingdom of God established in the heart of a full-grown human race and illuminating the universe with its transcendent attainments of goodness, beauty, and truth. The world does well to praise and worship its greatest deliverer, but has never yet appreciated the clearness of perception, nor the sublimity of heroism which sent Jesus forth virtually single-handed, for the disciples contributed nothing but love and sympathy, to attack a great religion which he knew had become an obstacle to the progress of mankind. It is no wonder that, in realising the inevitable bitterness of strife, he told the disciples that his mission was to kindle a fire upon earth, nor any wonder that, in seeing the necessity, he was in haste to have the fire kindled, that it might be the sooner over and as large a company as possible be rescued for the Kingdom of God. Perhaps he told them that he had a baptism to be baptised with and would gladly

have it accomplished. The traditional interpretation that this referred to his death is simply impossible. It could refer only to the conflict, which he was sure awaited him in Jerusalem, but the conflict would pass and then would come the victory. The disciples had been thinking that he was the Messiah, part of whose mission was believed to be to establish peace on earth; but, no! he had not come to establish peace, but division. When the fire was kindled and the flames of religious controversy spread over the land, families would be divided, three against two, father against son, mother against daughter.

This prospect weighed heavily upon the heart of Jesus, who shrank from conflict for himself and would willingly have calmed the passions of men, but who could see no other way for setting them free from the thralldom of the theologian and the dominion of the priest but to kindle in individual hearts such a new consciousness of the dignity and responsibility of manhood as to make a struggle inevitable.

*Luke xii, 54-59*

Luke turns to a talk to the multitude, presumably in Galilee, of which he gives a fragment. The people could tell the signs of the weather and ought to be able to tell the signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God from the many cures which they saw and which Jesus always interpreted as evidence that the dominion of Satan was nearly over. The argument was that, as when a creditor arrested any one for debt, he paid rather than to go to prison, so, now that the great judgment was about to begin, it would be wise for men to settle their accounts with God by reforming their

lives, rather than to wait until it was too late and they were swept away in the destruction which awaited the wicked.

*Luke xiii, 1-3*

The scene changes to Jerusalem. Jesus is warning the multitude of the danger of putting off the reformation of their lives until it is too late and against any feeling of false security. It was commonly believed by the Jews that calamities were punishments and therefore evidences of guilt, but this is one of the popular delusions, which Jesus combatted. The men who were killed at one time, when Pilate put down a riot, or those who lost their lives by the falling of the tower of Siloam, were not any worse than other men. The judgment and subsequent destruction of the wicked, in order to make the world a fit place for the Kingdom of God, were surely coming and would overtake them all, unless they changed their lives and made themselves fit for the Kingdom. He told a parable to illustrate the fact that God was patient, but that there was a limit to his patience. A fig tree had borne no figs for three years. The owner of the vineyard proposed to cut it down, but the vinedresser begged for one year more, that he might see what special care would do for it. Then, if there were no figs, it might be cut down. The moral of the parable was that the Jewish people were having their last chance. If there were no figs this year, their day was over. While the heart of Jesus overflowed with joy at the glorious prospects of life in the new Kingdom, the comforting of those who mourned, the feeding of the hungry, the binding up of wounds, or, as we should say, the aboli-



tion of crime, poverty, and disease, he never forgot and never omitted to warn men that the new conditions of life could not be realised until after all that was evil had been eliminated from human life, and there were only two ways open, either to change their lives so completely as to produce the fruits of righteousness now, or to be swept away in the coming destruction. The reference to "three years" in the parable has been supposed and, perhaps justly, to refer to visits in three previous years made by Jesus to Jerusalem.

*Luke xiii, 10-17*

This is an account of a healing in Galilee and of the old conflict with Pharisaism, because the healing took place on the Sabbath, but it shows especially how the sound moral judgment of Jesus always discovered and disclosed the weakness and absurdity of Pharisaism. It was impossible to carry out completely all the applications of the law against labour on the Sabbath, and they who were so zealous for it did not observe it themselves, since they all watered their cattle on that day. If the law could be and was always broken for the relief of the cattle, how much the more might it be disregarded for the relief of suffering humanity. The Pharisees were put to shame, but the people saw the point and no doubt wondered that they had never thought of it before.

*Luke xiii, 17-22*

This seemed to Luke a good place to record the parable of the mustard seed, which he found in Mark's Gospel, (iv, 31), and he added the parable of the leaven,

which teaches virtually the same truth, both of them setting forth the faith of Jesus that his teaching, buried and lost temporarily, was full of power and was working mightily beneath the surface of the Jewish people and at no distant day would show amazing results in a widespread transformation of the same into fitness for the Kingdom of God.

*Luke xiii, 23-31*

Some one came to Jesus with the question, Are there few that be saved? The question meant, Are there few who will be admitted to the Kingdom when it comes? It was purely a speculative question and asked out of curiosity, but with Jesus the matter was too serious to speculate about and he virtually answered the man, It does not matter so much to you how many will be admitted to the Kingdom, as whether you will or not and, without a very serious struggle, you certainly will not; therefore, "Strive." The entrance to life is like crowding through a narrow door, for you must go one at a time and, in the struggle to get in, leave behind your present habits, beliefs, prejudices, and ideals. You must begin the struggle at once, for there will be no admission after the Master of the house has shut the door, nor will it avail to knock and to clamour for admission, on the ground that you have always been religious; for the Master will say, "I know you not, depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. . . There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without. And they will come from the East and the West, from the North and from the South and will

sit down in the Kingdom of God." It was a very realistic picture of what Jesus expected to happen within the experience of that generation. God would establish his Kingdom upon earth. A judgment would precede it to separate the tares from the wheat. Patriarchs and prophets and multitudes of righteous men out of all past generations would return to enjoy the delights of the Kingdom which they had anticipated so long ago, while the supreme agony of the condemned would come from seeing the glory of the realised Kingdom which they had lost, because they had been unwilling to strive.

There is no suggestion of a Messiah in this passage, for "the Master of the house" is God, and Jesus does not refer to himself at all.

*Luke xiii, 31-35*

The scene is still in Galilee, before the journey to Jerusalem. The Pharisees had succeeded in prejudicing a large proportion of the people against Jesus and had plotted with some of the officials of Herod Antipas for his arrest. It is quite possible that, on his final return from the territory of Philip, some of them had tried to frighten him away, lest the people should be won to him again. As the conversation was with the Pharisees, they certainly would not have transmitted his answer to them; but, if his answer was overheard by some of his disciples and was correctly reported two generations later, it cannot be taken as a declaration that Jesus expected to be killed in Jerusalem, but merely as evidence that the Pharisees did not frighten him, because, if there were any killing to be done, Jerusalem was the place where they killed the prophets,

therefore Jesus would take his time in Galilee and depart at his convenience.

As regards the lamentation over Jerusalem, the account is misplaced here, since it belongs to Wednesday of the last week.

*Luke xiv, 1-35*

Various disconnected events and sayings are thrown together in a stage-setting in the house of a ruler of the Pharisees.

The familiar matter of the healing on the Sabbath and the impossibility of keeping the law come up again. The discomfiture of the Pharisees on this point undoubtedly made a great impression upon the common people.

This time it was not the watering of cattle by which the law was broken; but, if an ass or an ox fell into a cistern, any one would naturally help to pull him out without stopping to think of the law; therefore it was right to heal on the Sabbath.

It is quite possible that Jesus criticised the social customs of his day, but, if he did, these two instances given by Luke are the only ones recorded. It would seem the rather that these are illustrations, by which Luke thought that he was making the teaching of Jesus clearer, but without success. The first account illustrates the principle, "He that exalteth himself will be humbled; and he that humbleth himself will be exalted." It was but another form of the great teaching of Jesus that the service of humanity was the great duty of man, the results of life being in proportion to the service rendered, but this truth was of vastly wider application than could be illustrated by a warning against the ordinary human weakness of crowding oneself into prominence.

The warning against inviting the rich to a banquet instead of the poor is but a feeble application of the following parable and illustrates the fact that it was the common people and not the upper classes who were accepting the invitation to the divine banquet so soon to be held. Taken literally, it would suspend all social life among people of the same class in favour of a lower stratum, as the recipients of charity, and does not accord with the teaching of Jesus, but reflects the mental attitude of Luke who was distinctly socialistic in his ideas and much prejudiced against the rich as such. It is the frequent expression of his own ideas, as if they had come from Jesus, which has created the impression, among people unacquainted with the critical study of the Gospels, that Jesus taught impracticable socialistic ideas. There follows a genuine parable of Jesus, called forth by the exclamation by one of the guests at table: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." It gave Jesus an opportunity to illustrate by a parable who would be so fortunate as to eat bread in the Kingdom of God. Certainly not those who had been first invited, the representative classes of the Jewish people. They had all rejected the invitation and were like people, who, when invited to a supper, found ready excuses for not accepting.

But the supper would take place, nevertheless, and the master of the house, being angry, had sent his servant, this was Jesus himself, out into the streets and lanes of the city, to bring in the poor, the blind, and the lame. One can well imagine the profound impression which this parable made upon those who heard it and who saw it illustrated by what was going on before them, the rejection of the invitation to the Kingdom of God

on the part of the Pharisees and their adherents and its glad acceptance by many of the common people.

How entirely a parable could be developed and transformed under the play of popular imagination may be seen by turning to Matthew's version of this parable. (Mt. xxii.) The "certain man" has become "a certain king," the supper a marriage feast for his son, and the invitations are delivered by his servants.

Jesus, instead of doing the inviting, has become the prince for whom the feast is given, while the apostles deliver the invitations. The "certain man" does not simply send his servant to invite the poor of the city, but he sends out his armies to destroy the murderers, who had killed his servants, and to burn the city. This refers distinctly to the destruction of Jerusalem. Then, there being no available guests left among the Jews, the king sends his servants out upon the highways, which are the great Roman roads, to bid as many as they found to the marriage feast and, as the pagans gladly accepted the invitations, the wedding was furnished with guests. This is but an illustration of how easy it was in the early Christian days to change inadvertently the whole tenor of the teaching of Jesus upon any point. Jesus could not have concluded any of his teaching, at any time of his ministry, with the words of the twenty-fourth verse, "I say unto you that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper," because, down to the last moment of his life, he believed that the Kingdom was coming and that a large share of the Jewish people would be ready for citizenship, nor did he ever anticipate a great mission in his name throughout the pagan world.

The scene changes (v. 35) to some part of the journey to Jerusalem, when some of the following multitude

attracted by Jesus and his company essayed to join them. As before, at the beginning of the journey, Jesus would have no one go with him who had not a clear understanding of what the undertaking meant and was willing to make all the sacrifices which it entailed, so now he would have no one join his company who had not first seriously counted the cost. He must renounce all family ties as completely as if hatred had actually separated him from his own father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, and then take his life in his hands. Otherwise he might not join the little company of enthusiastic, determined men, which was journeying to Jerusalem. He must count the cost as seriously as a man who, in planning to build a tower, must ascertain whether he had money enough to finish it and must determine, as a king going to war, whether he dare attack the stronger force of the enemy and not be forced to make peace on the enemy's terms. Unless a man were willing to renounce all that he had, he could not enlist for the attack upon ecclesiasticism and orthodoxy.

Salt was good, but if the saltiness should be lost before it was needed for use, it was worth less than nothing. So enthusiasm was good, but, if it gave out at the critical moment, its weak possessor would become an obstacle to victory.

*Luke xv, 1-10; Matt. xviii, 12-14*

The scribes and Pharisees must have been shocked many times at seeing Jesus on friendly terms with the common people who did not keep the law and whom they imagined were rejected by God, because they were despised by them.

On one occasion Jesus told a parable to show how mistaken they were and how perfectly natural it was for God to be interested in every individual. Any man who had a hundred sheep would leave the ninety and nine and go in search of one that was lost, until he found it. And, when he brought it home, he would expect his friends and neighbours to rejoice with him that the lost was found. But a man was worth more than a sheep and God must be proportionately glad when a wanderer returned to the divine household, while joy would spread among the hosts of heaven that a lost soul had been found. It was wonderful teaching, then heard for the first time, the intrinsic value of the individual human soul. According to the Pharisees a man had no intrinsic value, but acquired an artificial value by his acquaintance with the subtleties of an intricate law and by making his life an elaborate mechanism of observances. Jesus taught that every man, because he was a man, belonged to the divine household and was entitled to its care, protection, comfort, and joy. If he wandered away into barren, unhealthy, dangerous places, God was interested in bringing him back, because he was a man and had the making of a man in him. This was his defence for his friendliness to the common people. He was acting as he was sure God would act, and this interpretation by him of the divine attitude toward humanity has become more and more, as the centuries have gone by, one of the great moral forces working for the emancipation, education, and elevation of the human race.

Jesus illustrated the same truth in the story of a lost coin. As the women of a neighbourhood would congratulate the one of their number who had found



a lost coin, so there would be joy throughout the spiritual world over the finding of a lost soul and so much the greater as a soul, with its infinite possibilities of growth, surpasses the value of a coin.

*Luke xv, 11-32*

The parable of the prodigal son is the greatest of the parables of Jesus. It was not in the source from which Mark drew the materials for his Gospel and was afterwards omitted by Matthew, because it was contrary to the pretensions of ecclesiasticism which were growing strong in his day. We are thus indebted to Luke only for its preservation. As the preceding parables had shown that God, on account of his interest in every man, would naturally seek to bring back the lost, this shows what must be the attitude of God toward a man who returned on his own initiative.

The prodigal son, receiving his share of the inheritance and wandering away into a foreign land, had wasted his substance in riotous living and had fallen into poverty and wretchedness. In the depth of his misery, he had come to himself. It would be better to be a slave, under the care and protection of his father, than to endure his present hopeless distress. He would go to his father and beg to be taken back as a slave. But the father had loved him and thought of him all the time, had hoped for his return, was looking for him, and saw him coming, pitied him in his distress, and was full of joy at his return. He did not listen to his talk about unworthiness. It was his son who had come home and it was therefore a time for rejoicing. Away with his wretched clothes. "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him," a ring on his hand and

shoes on his feet. Kill the fatted calf and "let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." This is the greatest teaching concerning the attitude of God to man which the world ever had. The divine heart is like the human heart, when natural and unperturbed, and God acts as a whole-souled, genuine, loving human father would act under like circumstances, for the human heart in its best instincts is a manifestation of the divine heart and is therefore a real revelation of God. Thus Jesus was a real revealer of God to men for he was sure that his intuitions were true and that the motives which he found in his own heart were identical with the motives of the heart of God.

The Pharisees, who listened to this wonderful story, must have been shocked and irritated beyond all measure. They could not imagine the relationship between God and men as natural and moral. It seemed to them that it must be royal, judicial, and legal. There must be a court, with laws, penalties, and satisfactions. Every transgression entailed a penalty, which could not be removed except in the way which they imagined God himself had provided, by the prescribed sacrifice offered through the duly authorised priest. If this teaching of Jesus should spread among the people, that God would forgive any sinner who came to himself and amended his life, the whole Jewish religion would be swept away, the temple, the priests, the sacrifices all abolished. It was preposterous and, not long afterward, the only charge said to have been brought against Jesus at his trial was that he had foretold the destruction of the temple. The Pharisees were entirely right in their deduction from his teaching, for the parable of the prodigal son is the protest of Jesus

against all kinds of priests, every variety of priestcraft and every theory of atonement which the ignorance, the speculations, or the fears of mankind have devised, and so long as the story is read, so long may faith be strong that it will eventually bear its inevitable fruit in sweeping away every barrier which intervenes between the repentant soul of man and its divine Father.

It is quite probable that the second part of the parable was a later addition by Jesus himself in reply to criticism and in justification of his teaching concerning the attitude of God. Those who had been accustomed to think of religion as a set of rules and conformities would naturally raise the objection that the older son had not received due consideration in that so much was made of the returning prodigal, but Jesus assured them that, on the contrary, the older son ought to have been as glad as the Father, because his brother who had been dead was alive again. The whole parable has been justly called "the grandest defence of the religion of Jesus" (Gunkel). There is no escape from its teaching. God does not forgive sins on account of the death of Jesus, nor by reason of any kind of atonement, or sacrifice, nor as a reward for holding "right views" about anything, but simply because it is his nature to forgive every one who comes to himself and returns to his love and care. Any other teaching is contrary to the religion of Jesus.

*Luke xvi, 1-13*

The parable of the rich man and the steward is given by Luke only. It was part of the special training of the disciples and, like all parables, was intended to illus-

trate a single point. If one attempts to find allegories in it, it can be made to mean any amount of irrelevant things. The point was that the disciples must use as much intelligence and practical common-sense in dealing with the moral treasures which had been committed to them as shrewd and successful business men used in the management of their affairs. They were more practical, wiser, than the children of light, but it ought not to be so. Therefore, Jesus bid his disciples copy the methods of the practical people. "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," cultivate real sympathy and beneficence as the ordinary, practical people make use of their counterfeits for selfish ends, so that, when the end comes, you may be found to be worthy citizens for the Kingdom of God.

Luke adds some reflections of his own and fragments of conversation from other connections, which have nothing to do with this parable.

*Luke xvi, 14-18*

The mention of money made this seem to Luke a good place to record one of the many conflicts with the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, and yet the controversy here given has nothing to do with money. The frequent showing up in public of the unreality and hypocrisy of the Pharisees constantly fed the flames of their hostility to Jesus. In this account he says to them: You are the people who pretend to be good; but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. This is not the "meek and gentle" Jesus of popular imagination, but the enthusiastic and

fearless reformer. They had no doubt accused him of teaching men to break the law, but he turns upon them with the frequent accusation that they neither knew it, nor kept it themselves. The law, he told them, had lasted until John and now the Gospel was taking its place and yet the Gospel was not an abrogation, but a fulfilment of the law, because it recognised its underlying and eternal principles and therefore the law would last forever. For instance, he said: "Everyone that putteth away his wife and marrieth another committeth adultery; and he that marrieth one that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." The facility of divorce was precisely what the law allowed, but Jesus taught that in this respect the Jewish law was contrary to the law of nature, which is the law of God. Therefore he was teaching men to keep the law by fulfilling its spirit, instead of teaching them as they did to take advantage of its letter and so to break the real law of God, which was the law of nature.

*Luke xvi, 19-31*

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is simply a story and not a parable and can hardly have originated with Jesus, but must have been a popular story, from which the suffering poor derived comfort. In a future world the rôles would be reversed. The rich would be punished, because they had had their good things in this world, and the poor rewarded, because they had been miserable here. This is about the way in which the suffering poor, with undeveloped moral natures, would interpret a future life, but with Jesus the results of life always depended upon character and not upon material conditions and he never could have used, even

as an illustration, anything so entirely unmoral as this story. Its only interest for us, therefore, is that it reflects the popular notions of the common people among the Jews in his day.

Luke adds to the original story, which ends with verse 25, an allegory about the man with five brothers, who begs that Lazarus may be sent to warn his brothers lest they come into the place of torment, but Abraham declines on the ground that, if they do not believe Moses and the prophets, they would not believe, though one should go to them from the dead. This can refer only to the unbelief of the Gospel by the Jewish people, notwithstanding the reported resurrection of Jesus and, naturally, the allegory did not originate with him. Many years later the author of the fourth Gospel related the actual return of Lazarus from the dead. Thus we have all the steps of an interesting process, first a popular legend made into an apparent parable, then this parable enlarged into an allegory and, finally, the allegory transformed into a miracle (Pfleiderer.) The reference to Moses and the Prophets, as affording sufficient warning against the possibility of torment in a future life, is an evidence of the popular ignorance of the Jewish people; for the Hebrew Scriptures contain not the most remote suggestion concerning a future life. All such beliefs came from the late apocalyptic literature, which had come to be included under the term "Moses and the Prophets," in entire ignorance of its origin.

*Luke xvii, 1-10*

Several fragments of the training of the disciples are gathered into a few verses. In the early days Jesus

had undoubtedly had a large following in Galilee, but multitudes had fallen away, owing to the active hostility of the Pharisees, and Jesus no doubt often told his disciples that the punishment of the men who had caused the little people, who had believed him, to stumble, would be dreadful at the judgment which would precede the establishment of the Kingdom. It would be better for those men to be drowned at once in the Lake of Galilee.

He urged the disciples to learn to forgive and often tried to impress upon them the truth that they could not expect God to forgive them, until they had learned to forgive others.

No doubt the disciples, often seeing what a power faith was in the life of Jesus, desired a like power, but, according to the narrative, he did not tell them how it might be acquired or cultivated, but merely gave them an illustration of how limitless it was. Jesus was certainly conscious of such a power of divine co-operation that it seemed to him virtually unbounded, but it was a power which could be acquired only by individual experience and could not be taught.

The conclusion from the story of the slave that, after we have done our best, we must still acknowledge ourselves unprofitable servants, sounds more like the teaching of Paul than of Jesus, for, while he taught that service was the normal interpretation of life, he never taught that self-depreciation was a duty.

*Luke xvii, 11-19*

If Jesus did not go through Samaria on his way to Jerusalem but through Perea, then the story of the ten lepers did not refer to an actual event, but was

originally a parable which Jesus told in Jerusalem, the point of which would be perfectly evident. The Jews did not appreciate his message enough to thank God for it, whereas even a Samaritan, whom they despised, would do better. The application would be evident and effective.

*Luke xvii, 20-37*

The answer of Jesus, which Luke gives, to the question of the Pharisees as to when the Kingdom of God would come has caused more perplexity and given rise to more controversy than almost anything else in the Gospels.

It is perfectly evident, from the study of them as a whole that Jesus shared the popular belief that the Kingdom of God meant the establishment of God's personal sovereignty over the Jewish people and that he derived his overwhelming enthusiasm from his belief that the great catastrophe would happen suddenly and soon. He could not, therefore, have taught the entirely contradictory belief that the Kingdom was to be a gradual and invisible growth in human hearts and it is necessary to find some way to reconcile this apparent contradiction in his teaching. Did he say—the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you, or the Kingdom of God is within you? The authorities disagree as to how to translate the Greek and as to what must have been the Aramaic original. If we are to accept the translation—the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you—it would agree with his frequent conclusion that the cures which he wrought were evidences that the power of Satan was in process of breaking and, therefore, that the Kingdom was so near that it was virtually



already in their midst. His answer to the Pharisees would be, therefore, that the Kingdom was very near, because its signs were so abundant that it might be said to be already in their midst.

If we take the other rendering, which is much the better one,—the Kingdom of God is within you—it can mean only that those, who were already virtually living its life, had the consciousness within themselves that it must be near at hand; but the Pharisees, to whom Jesus was talking, were not living the life of the Kingdom and therefore had no means of knowing how near it was. With either rendering the answer of Jesus to the question when the Kingdom was coming—was that it was coming very soon and we may be perfectly sure that he did not for a moment mean to imply that the Kingdom was altogether a matter of feeling, conviction, and experience, and not an external reality, thus contradicting all his teaching; for, immediately after this conversation, Luke represents him as impressing upon the disciples that the coming of the Kingdom would be as sudden and as real “as the lightening, when it lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven.” While the rest of this passage represents the conditions of later days and did not originate with Jesus, nevertheless the belief that the Kingdom would come soon and must come suddenly was one of the fixed beliefs which the early Christians inherited from him and the one on which they most depended to keep them patient and brave while waiting for the Kingdom, the coming of which seemed to be delayed.

This chapter, from the 22nd verse to the end, is interesting as an illustration of the transformation, which the teaching of Jesus underwent at the hands

of the earliest Christian generations. It is no longer God, who is coming to establish his Kingdom, but Jesus, who is coming back as the heavenly Messiah to establish his own Kingdom. His death was construed as a necessity, as evidence of submission to the divine will and the ground of his elevation to his high estate.

It would be a pity to become anxious, or to let belief grow weak, because his return was delayed, or to be beguiled by any false reports concerning it, because it would be as sudden and as evident as the lightning and as sure as the catastrophes about which they read in their Scriptures, the flood which drowned the world in Noah's time and the fire and brimstone which caused such destruction at Sodom. The return of Jesus would be as sudden as those ancient supposed events and, like them, his coming would bring vengeance and destruction to all but the Christians. So sudden would it be that there would be no time to go down from the housetop or to return home from the field. Of two in one bed, one would be taken and the other left; of two women grinding together, one would be taken and the other left. Those who were taken would be hurried away to judgment and destruction and their bodies abandoned to the birds of prey, while those who were left would be ready for the establishment of the Kingdom of the Messiah.

Such were the beliefs of the early Christians. The proportion of the teaching of Jesus which they contained was very small. He recognised the necessity of a judgment in order to make the world a proper place for a divine Kingdom, but his heart was filled with the anticipated joy of the Kingdom, while his constant effort was to win men to the love of better things and not to frighten them into some external

conformity. The early Christians, however, were often of a different spirit and, feeling secure as to their own future and suffering many things from their enemies, very early developed the unfortunate habit of gloating over the prospective fate of the wicked.

*Luke xviii, 1-8*

Jesus undoubtedly tried to teach his disciples the nature of prayer, but apparently without much success.

With him prayer was a permanent spiritual attitude, the consciousness of dependence upon and co-operation with God, with them it was the repetition of fixed formulas. Jesus certainly never represented God as yielding somewhat ungraciously to persistent teasing, nor did he ever teach that the cry for vengeance was a proper expression of prayer. This supposed teaching is a reflection of conditions toward the end of the first century, when the Christians had had long experience of persecution and in their desperation were literally crying for vengeance and when, in consequence of defections from their ranks, some had begun to wonder whether, when Jesus did come back, as they expected him to do, he would find any faith left. He never anticipated these conditions, but expected the Kingdom of God to come, at least a generation before Luke wrote his Gospel.

*Luke xviii, 9-14*

It is remarkable that Luke did not see the violent contrast between what is evidently part of the teaching of Jesus concerning prayer, as illustrated by the story of the Pharisee and the publican and the preceding prayer for vengeance. This story properly belongs to

the days in Jerusalem, because it was a custom of the Pharisees to go to the temple to pray. Jesus illustrates the mode and spirit of Pharisaic prayer. With them every religious observance, and all the keeping of the law, constituted meritorious acts, which gave them a claim to reward from God.

Jesus represents their prayers as a rehearsal of their claims, while, over against this ordinary Jewish type, he portrays one of the despised tax-collectors, who knew that he had failed in many of his duties and needed the forgiveness of God. This was the sort of man who Jesus said would go out of the temple a better man than the other. It was a criticism of the whole attitude of the Jewish religion towards God and in harmony with his constant teaching that God forgave sinners who repented.

*The End of Luke's Insertion.*

§ XLIX: *Mark x, 1-12; Matt. xix. 1-9*

The earlier tradition, as recorded in Mark's Gospel, was that Jesus went to Jerusalem by way of Peræa and not through Samaria. The two accounts coalesce again at Jericho, but, as already stated, if Jesus had gone through Samaria, he would hardly have made the detour necessary to get to Jericho. In saying that "the multitude came together unto him *again*," there would seem to be a possible suggestion of earlier visits of Jesus to Judæa, although there is no mention of any in the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus had protested seriously against the common custom of divorce among the Jews, and the Pharisees, in asking their question, undoubtedly expected to show that his teaching was contrary to

the law, but Jesus answered them by the use of their own methods.

Moses, they said, allowed divorce, to which Jesus replied, certainly, so he did, but it was a concession to the hardness of your hearts and you may read, also in the teaching of Moses, in the book of Genesis, that in the beginning it was not so, but that since God created sexes it was evidently his intention that man and wife should be one flesh, therefore, what he had joined together, man ought not to put asunder. On the premises, which both Jesus and the Pharisees accepted there was no escaping from this argument that the original law could not be abrogated by a later concession. So far as we are concerned the fundamental principle, as laid down by Jesus, that marriage is grounded in nature and is therefore a law of God which ought not to be broken, remains absolutely true, although we no longer believe, as he and his opponents did, that the Pentateuch contains a code of divine law. The disciples, accustomed to Jewish laxity in divorce, found the teaching of Jesus severe and asked him about it again. He told them, if a man divorced his wife and married another, he committed adultery and, must have added that, if she, who is divorced marries another, she commits adultery. Two early manuscripts give it in this way, whereas, as given in our received text—"If she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery"—is impossible, for this was in accordance with Roman law, but not with Jewish law. Either Mark, more accustomed to Roman law, did not know that the Jewish law was different, or else some one altered his original text to make it cover the provisions of Roman law.

Matthew introduces one possible cause for divorce,

of which Luke makes no mention, and apparently with permission to marry again. Which is right we cannot tell, but it would hardly seem that the later tradition could have invented the exception. It needs to be borne in mind that Jesus was not attempting to legislate, as if he had been the Messiah, but was stating his strong personal conviction which had grown out of his clear intuitions as to right and wrong and which he thought was established by divine authority in the Book of Genesis and in nature.

Matthew adds some further conversation on this subject, which Luke omits.

*Matt. xix, 10-12*

The disciples objected that, if things were so serious, if a man might not divorce his wife and marry another whenever he pleased, one might as well not marry at all. This would have been the ordinary Jewish criticism of the position taken by Jesus. But Jesus said, No! one ought to marry and, if trouble came, the strength of conviction as to what was right would become a power for self-control. This is the evident meaning of the words: "All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given."

He then added that there were only three classes of men who might not marry. Some were incapacitated by nature, others by man, while there were others who found it necessary to refrain from marriage, because their lives were consecrated to a great purpose with which marriage would interfere. They had made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. He was thinking of his own case. No one would have enjoyed a home, a wife, and children more than he.

He had a great love of children and a sincere esteem for women, which was entirely un-Jewish, putting them upon an equality with men, while the Jews thought that they had no souls; but he had made all the sacrifices, including a home, a wife, and a family. He had made himself a eunuch for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake and had required of those who followed him to Jerusalem the same sacrifices, of such as were married the abandonment of wife and children, that they might be unfettered in their great endeavour to prepare the Jewish people for the Kingdom of God. Matthew would never have inserted this conversation in his Gospel if he had understood it; but, when he wrote, the Jewish theory of good works, as establishing a credit account with God, was in full vigour among the Christians, while asceticism was already undermining morality with its theory that the sacrifices which it entailed entitled one to interest infinitely compounded in the world to come.

With no spirituality and no devotion to high ideals it was easy to construe the words of Jesus into the promise of a great reward in the next world, in return for celibacy in this world.

§ *L: Mark x, 13-16; Luke xviii, 15-17; Matt, xix, 13-15*

Jesus loved the children and the account follows naturally after the record of his views as to the sanctity of marriage. The disciples thought that the children were in the way and would have kept them at a distance, but Jesus not only welcomed them, but found in them an illustration for some of his greatest teaching. Let them come, he said, for they are like the citizens of the Kingdom of God. If any one does not receive

the Kingdom as a little child, he will not enter therein. The children were unspoiled by the conventionalities of life, uncontaminated by its vices. With them speculation had not frozen into dogma, nor religion become a mechanism of observances. They were natural and spontaneous, trustful and affectionate. Thus they illustrated true religion and their natural attitude towards every one was the normal attitude of every one towards God. Men needed to get away from their theories and conformities, to learn to love God, to trust him, to work with him. This was the only fitness for his Kingdom. And then the Kingdom was a free gift. It could not be earned or deserved and men must learn to receive it as children took gifts, with gratitude and joy. It was wonderful teaching and it still stands as a rebuke and invitation to the world.

Mark says that Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them. This was afterwards omitted by both Luke and Matthew, because by the time they wrote, the evidence of a real human affection on the part of Jesus had become incompatible with the ideas of a superhuman Christ.

§ *LI: Mark x, 17-31; Luke xviii, 18-30; Matt. xix, 16-30*

It is related that on the way to Jericho a man came running and knelt before Jesus and asked him, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" and that Jesus said in reply, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God," which shows that it was as far as possible from the mind of Jesus to think of himself as superhuman or to put himself in any respect on a par with God. This declaration by him was at variance with the theological spec-



ulations, which had become common early in the second century. Matthew, therefore, changed the whole account to read, "Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" to which Jesus is represented as replying, "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is, who is good." Thus, Matthew made Jesus avoid declining the attribute of goodness. The authorised English version does not show this discrepancy, for the King James translators altered Matthew's Gospel to make it conform to the statements in those of Mark and Luke. The translators of the new version have been more honest, but the churches still refuse to allow the use of the new version.

Jesus referred the young man to the commandments, by the keeping of which one might be reasonably sure of admission to the Kingdom when it should come. In calling attention to the moral law and saying nothing about the ritual and ceremonial law he emphasises once more his constant teaching that the issues of life are moral and depend entirely upon character. The young man, judging from his enthusiasm and genuineness he must have been a young man, declared that he had always led a moral life. He was evidently sincere, honest, and wholesome and he at once won the love of Jesus, to whom it seemed as if he might be capable of making the great sacrifices and becoming one of his assistants in preparing the Jewish people for the coming of the Kingdom of God. He therefore said to him: "There is one thing more that you might do," for the English translation—"One thing thou lackest" is exceedingly stupid and misleading. He had already told him that the way to inherit eternal life was to keep the commandments and therefore could not have added

that there was yet another condition not included in the commandments; but there was one thing more that he might do, he might join Jesus and the disciples in their attack upon a worn-out religion which was keeping people out of the Kingdom of God. To do so he would have to do what they had done, divest himself of all entanglements, get into light marching order, and burn his bridges. He would have to sell his property and give away the proceeds to the poor. Then after disposing of your property, Jesus said, "Come, follow me," namely to Jerusalem. Mark inserts, "take up thy cross," which Luke and Matthew very properly omit, because Jesus did not say it. An immeasurable amount of misery and mischief might have been saved, if Christian people had had intelligence enough to see that all such extreme sacrifices required by Jesus had reference only to those who had the necessary enthusiasm and courage to enlist for the bold and dangerous attack upon the Jewish religion. The dulness which paralysed the possibility of any historical consciousness, and therefore let men imagine that Jesus was laying down a rule for Christian life through all the age-long history of a new ecclesiasticism of which he never dreamed, filled the deserts of the Orient with swarms of fanatics and the cloisters of Europe with hordes of useless monks and still demoralises thousands of people with the shocking notion that voluntary poverty is the highest ideal of life and rests upon the authority of Jesus. Let us get back to history and we shall see that all these extreme requirements were not rules of life, but the special equipment for a crisis.

The early Christians lost what little historical consciousness they might have had, because, from their

mistaken zeal in attempting to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, the actual facts of history did not interest them, while they misinterpreted nearly everything that he said or did. Thus they very early forgot what he went to Jerusalem for. It seemed to them that he went there to be killed, in order that he might become the heavenly Messiah. Therefore, if they found in the traditions an account that on the way to Jerusalem he invited a man to follow him, it seemed to them to be part of a general invitation addressed to all mankind and, if, along with the invitation to follow, they found the requirement of voluntary poverty, this too seemed to them to be a general rule for the new religion which they imagined that Jesus was founding. As regards the facts, Jesus invited certain men to "follow" him at two different times and for two different purposes. At first it was a few men in Galilee who were invited to follow him in order that they might become fishers of men in the towns about the Lake of Galilee. Afterwards he invited the same men and others to "follow" him to Jerusalem for a much more serious struggle, attended by danger. Other people he did not think of as his "followers," but as the field upon which he and his friends were sowing good seed, some of which would spring up and bear fruit in God's own time.

Matthew's Gospel shows that the iniquity of misconstruction was already fully equipped for mischief in his time, for he changed the original words of Jesus into, "if thou would'st be perfect," showing that men already recognised two standards of conduct, the "mere conformity," by means of which one might gain access to heaven, and asceticism, which contained the counsels of perfection and entitled its votaries to a great reward. Rome still teaches the double standard and calls no

one "religious" except monks and nuns, but the irreligious interpretation of the teaching of Jesus is as old as the Christian religion.

Jesus told the young man that after he had given away his property his treasure would be in heaven. Naturally, for his heart and all his interests would be there and all his efforts devoted to enlarging its citizenship. When the Kingdom was established the young man would be provided for; and yet Jesus was by no means inviting him to enter into a speculation, to surrender his property now in the hope of an enormous reward when the Kingdom came, but trying to awaken his faith that, in freeing himself from everything which might hinder his usefulness to the Cause, he need have no anxiety as to the future. The young man was very sorry that Jesus had said this and went away grieved, because he was rich. Jesus was disappointed too, for he had taken very kindly to him and hoped to have him for a helper. He turned to the disciples and said, "How hardly will they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God." They misunderstood him as a matter of course. They thought him to mean that hardly any rich men would be admitted to the Kingdom of Heaven when it came, simply because he had been rich, and to this day many Christians who have no realisation of what Jesus meant by the Kingdom of God imagine that he taught that most rich men would not go to heaven when they died. But Jesus had already told the young man that he would inherit eternal life, because he had always led a moral life. Always and everywhere he taught that the results of life depended upon character, without regard to whether one were rich or poor, and it is idle to say that he shared the beliefs of the Jewish pietists that voluntary poverty

and almsgiving were the most pleasing virtues in the sight of God. He certainly did not say so here, nor suggest anything of the kind. What he did say was that it was difficult to persuade a rich man to make the sacrifices necessary to join him in the supreme attempt to prepare the Jewish people for the coming of the Kingdom of God. The disciples, taking him with hard literalness, were astonished, but he tried to make his meaning plain by saying, "How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." The disciples did not understand him any better, but exclaimed, "Who then can be saved?" to which Jesus replied that God could give a man strength to make the sacrifices which the immediate crisis demanded.

It was perfectly natural after this conversation that Peter, speaking for himself and the others, should remind Jesus of what they had given up. They had abandoned their families, their property, their occupations and never expected to return to the same conditions, for, if any of them survived to get back to Galilee, all the conditions of life would have been changed. The Kingdom would have come and everything would be upon a new basis. Jesus assured them that those who had left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, because they trusted him, or because they were devoted to the Cause of the coming Kingdom, would receive a hundredfold, now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers and children and lands, and, in the world to come, eternal life. This was the actual belief of Jesus. The Kingdom of God was to be a very material reality, a regeneration of things in this present world.

It seemed to him natural and inevitable that those who had believed in it and worked for it should have a large share of its comforts and joys. It is impossible that he added the words—with persecutions—because they would be entirely out of keeping with his anticipations. The words must have been added by some scribe, in later days, in order to establish some appearance of harmony between the anticipations of Jesus and the experiences of the Christians. The suggestion of persecutions is incompatible with the account which Matthew gives, that Jesus told the twelve apostles that in the coming regeneration of the world they would sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. In the original account, as given by Mark, the idea of reward does not appear and Jesus certainly never talked about any distribution of thrones among his disciples.

In the redistribution of things at the establishment of the Kingdom, those who had sacrificed and suffered for it would naturally have a large share, and yet their devotion would not have been for the sake of reward, but out of sincere attachment to Jesus and his Cause. The common Jewish belief, however, that every good act was a speculative investment, to be exorbitantly requited by God, could not be permanently suppressed and very early came back among the Christians in full force, as is shown in Matthew's Gospel. He represents Peter, not merely as suggesting the sacrifices, which he and the rest had made, but as actually asking what they were going to get in return. Thus we learn that at a very early day the theory that good works constituted a claim upon God was one of the pernicious heritages which Christianity received from Judaism.

The conversation closed with the saying of Jesus.

"Many that are first will be last; and the last first." Many of those who occupied the prominent positions in the world as it was did not owe them to character, while many of the upright, faithful people led obscure lives; but in the reconstructed world things would be reversed, character and fitness would decide position so that many who were first and many who were last now would change places.

§ *LII: Mark x, 32-34; Luke xviii, 31-34; Matt. xx, 17-19*

This is the third time that Jesus is represented as telling his disciples that he is going to Jerusalem to be killed. It is given three times, because it was the most important point in early Christian apologetics. The Christians were sure that Jesus was the Messiah, but a Messiah who should suffer and die was as far as possible from Jewish ideas. The Christians could not hope to win converts to their belief, unless they could give satisfactory evidence that the suffering and death of Jesus were part of the pre-ordained rôle of the Messiah and the necessary prelude to his elevation to the position of heavenly Messiah and his return as a judging, avenging, and ruling Messiah. It is to emphasise this belief that the supposed prediction by him of his suffering, death, and resurrection is repeated three times; but we have seen already and shall see still more clearly that the disciples were totally unprepared for his death and that no one expected a resurrection, which is evidence enough that these supposed predictions are not facts of history, but later apologetics.

It is certainly probable that there were times on the way to Jerusalem when Jesus was intensely wrought

up and suffered fearfully from depression, so that the disciples did not dare to speak to him and were even afraid of him. He knew what a terrible struggle he must have with the religious authorities and could not help realising that his own death was possible, though not inevitable. He would, therefore, try to strengthen the faith of the disciples by telling them that whatever happened to him the Kingdom of God would surely come, but this was very different from predicting his death as inevitable and explaining it as part of a divine plan. He did not expect to die before the coming of the Kingdom.

§ *LIII*: *Mark* x, 35-45; *Luke* xxii, 24-28; *Matt.* xx, 20-28

How entirely materialistic the anticipations concerning the Kingdom of God were is evident from the request of two of the disciples that the two best positions in the Kingdom might be reserved for them, nor did Jesus differ from them in this respect; for the Kingdom which he anticipated was not a spiritual and heavenly life, but a reconstructed human society, with God in control. That two of the disciples could make such a request shows that Jesus had not, a short time before, given the chief position to Peter. He does not rebuke them for their request, but asks if they are really able to share his dangers and sufferings, for he had very reasonable doubts as to whether they could be depended upon at a critical moment. The question, as given in the Gospel, "Can ye drink of the cup that I shall drink of? and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?" is expressed in the language of later sacramental theories and is not in the original form, as put by Jesus. They



assured him that they were able to share his dangers and sufferings and he expressed his gratification at their confidence and fidelity, but told them that the places of honour in the Kingdom were not his to bestow, but would be bestowed by God according to his pleasure which is further evidence that he had not presumed to act for God in making Peter the prime minister of the Kingdom and that he did not think of himself as the Messiah. By the time that Matthew's Gospel was written the halo of sanctity which seemed to separate the apostles from ordinary men had grown so bright as to make it no longer seem possible that two of them could display such ordinary human ambitions as were indicated by this narrative. The author, therefore, softened down the tradition so as to make it appear that it was not the men themselves, but their mother, who made the request. He did not, however, make the alteration very successfully, for, in his Gospel, the mother disappears after asking the question and the conversation is carried on with the men themselves.

The other disciples, learning that two of their number had tried to steal a march upon them by getting in a claim to the best places in the coming Kingdom, were angry and a quarrel arose, which gave Jesus the opportunity for some very necessary instruction. The new human society in the Kingdom of God would be as real as the world about them then was, but it would be of a totally different spirit and with entirely new ambitions. Instead of a struggle for position and power to be used in an irresponsible and selfish way, those who were really great in the new state of society would be the ones who made themselves most useful to their fellow men. In this way Jesus spiritualised the ideals which he had inherited and gave them a new life. The

Kingdom of God did not come as he expected, nor when he expected, but the human race still presses forward toward its ideals, realising ever more clearly as the centuries go by that the value of life is in exact proportion to the service rendered, and it is inevitable that this wonderful intuition of Jesus must become eventually the great lever which will lift all humanity toward the greater civilisation of the centuries to come.

Mark adds, in the 45th verse, a theory of the death of Jesus which he would have repudiated with his utmost vehemence and which is contrary to all his teaching, not only that he expected to die, but that his death would be in the nature of purchase money, which would make it possible for God to forgive sins. This theory Mark had learned from Paul who had developed it by trying to make the death of Jesus fit into his rabbinical theology. The belief and teaching of Jesus was that it was perfectly natural for God to forgive every one who came to himself and returned in love and loyalty to his Father, because the Father was so glad that the lost was found. There never was the slightest thought in his mind that God had to be paid to forgive; therefore, wherever there is a suggestion of this theory in the Gospel, it must be eliminated from the true story of Jesus. He undoubtedly said to his disciples that he was among them as one who served. All the activities of his life were interpreted by him in terms of service, but the service was in the living, not in the dying. They, too, were to learn to measure the value of their lives not by what they could get, but by what they could do. But this great teaching would have been entirely nullified if he had added that his death would be a ransom; for, if that were so, it would not matter much whether their lives were of any real use or not.

The chief concern would be to make sure of their share of the ransom and all through the Christian ages this Pauline theory of the death of Jesus as a price paid for sin has paralysed the moral energies of the Christian multitude, deadening the idealities which should have grown from the teaching of Jesus by the narcotism of an atonement and the specious delusion that "Jesus did it all."

§ LIV: *Mark x, 46-52; Luke xviii, 35-43; Matt. xx, 29-34*

Tradition had preserved the account of the healing of a blind man at Jericho. Matthew afterwards made it two blind men, probably because he had omitted one from the story of an earlier healing at Bethsaida.

*Luke xix, 1-10*

Luke alone relates the story of Zacchæus, which is very similar to the earlier account of Levi and is a further illustration of the attitude of Jesus toward repentant sinners and his belief that God felt as he did, glad of their return, without any thought of legal procedure or legal satisfaction. This always scandalised the Pharisees, as did the custom of Jesus of living on friendly terms with people, who did not regulate their lives according to the Jewish tradition.

*Luke xix, 11-27; Matt. xxv, 14-30*

Luke also gives a parable, which he confuses with an allegory.

The parable, interpreted in modern speech, teaches

that life is a trust and that its results will naturally be in exact proportion to each one's fidelity in the execution of his trust.

At the judgment, preceding the establishment of the Kingdom, each one's record would be shown and then those who had done well would be given new positions of trust in the Kingdom, according to the ability which each had displayed, while those who had neglected such gifts as they had would be cast out into outer darkness to mourn their neglected opportunities. Matthew conserves the conclusion of the parable better than Luke. The teaching is wonderful, for it is nothing less than the enunciation of a law which is always in operation in this world and which Jesus believed was also in operation upon the larger scale of life throughout the universe. "Unto every one that hath will be given; but from him that hath not, even that he hath will be taken away from him." There are repeated crises in every one's life at which the only questions are: What use have you made of yourself, what have you done with such physical, mental, moral, æsthetic, spiritual powers as you had? For those who have done well in developing the power within them there are always positions of greater responsibility waiting, while for those who have neglected the use of themselves there is a constant slipping back. Such is the law in this world—use or lose—and our experience shows that it admits of no exceptions. Jesus was sure that it was the universal law and applied to life everywhere, but theologians have always obscured his teaching by persuading people that the final issues of life do not depend upon a man's intrinsic value, but upon what opinions he has held.

When men grow wise enough to be able to dispense

with their blind guides, this great teaching of Jesus, appealing as it does to the normal human sense of justice and to the noblest human ambitions, will become the inspiration of a permanent and sober enthusiasm, opening the grand vista of superb positions of responsibility, capacity, and power for which men are training themselves hereafter by the development of the powers within them here and now.

Those who are under the spell of theological traditions imagine that Jesus in this parable was referring to his own future return to judgment, after his journey into a "far country." There is nothing, however, in the parable to warrant such an interpretation, while it is entirely contrary to his attitude and belief. It was simply an illustration of what would befall men at the coming judgment, an illustration introduced by the words, as Matthew gives them, "It is as when." Nor was it told, as Luke supposed, to correct the misapprehensions of those who "supposed" that the Kingdom of God was immediately to appear, for this was precisely not only what Jesus supposed, but what he believed with all his might. He certainly did not tell a parable to contradict the very thing that he was trying to persuade men to believe; but, when Luke wrote, it had become very convenient to give the parable a new interpretation, making it refer to Jesus as the King who had gone into a far country and would return to hold a reckoning with his servants. Luke confuses the original teaching still more by making Jesus illustrate his supposed meaning by means of an allegory drawn from what was then recent history. When Herod the Great died, 4 B.C., his son Archælaus went to Rome to solicit the Kingdom from Augustus. The Jews also sent a delegation to Rome to beg Augustus

not to make him King, but Augustus compromised the matter by making him Ethnarch of Judæa and Samaria. It is quite probable that on his return Archælaus rewarded those who had been loyal to him. Jesus drew his illustrations from nature and from the familiar occupations of daily life, never from history, and would hardly have used the doings of Archælaus to illustrate the methods of God; but Luke found this story in Josephus (*Ant.*, xvii, 11, 1-4) and thought that "A certain nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a Kingdom and to return" was a most fitting illustration for a parable of Jesus which he entirely misunderstood.

### III. THE PASSION

#### §§ LV-XC

§ LV: *Mark xi, 1-10; Luke xix, 29-38; Matt. xxi, 1-9*

Jesus and his disciples arrived at Bethany, a village about three miles from Jerusalem. He had friends there, who were known to later tradition as the sisters Mary and Martha. Being much worn from the intense nervous strain of the preceding weeks and weary from the journey, he determined to ride to Jerusalem the following day and for this purpose sent two of his disciples to a neighbouring village to find an ass. This simple fact was afterward narrated among the Christians in a way to give the impression that he had supernatural knowledge as to where they would find an ass and supernatural influence over its owners to compel them to have it ready and waiting for him. It is certainly very improbable that Jesus suggested or that the disciples selected an unbroken colt, which would have been a very uncomfortable and uncertain animal to ride and especially in the midst of such a crowd as the Passover brought together upon the roads leading to Jerusalem, but the Messianic theories of the early Christians made them like to think of this event as the royal entrance of the Son of David into his kingdom and it seemed to them that a colt which had not been ridden conferred a special dignity.

Their successors, early in the second century, went further and imagined that this simple riding to Jerusalem was the literal fulfilment of a prophecy which they found in second Zechariah, written about 280 B.C., and which stated that a future King, who would conquer Damascus, Tyre, Sidon, Ascalon, etc., and establish a great kingdom, stretching from the Mediterranean and the Red Sea to the Euphrates, would make his triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding upon an ass, even a colt, the foal of an ass. They even imagined that Jesus arranged the ride in order to fulfil the prophecy (Mt. xxi, 4), and went so far in their literalness as to declare (Mt. xxi, 7) that he rode two animals at once. That, however, the early Christians enjoyed no monopoly of folly may be evident from the perusal of some of the most modern "Lives of Jesus," in which men of large attainments in scholarship and great reputation do not hesitate to state that Jesus felt it incumbent upon himself to carry out the provisions of this prophecy. In other words, they assume that the Jewish notions about a Messiah had a substantial basis, that a Messiah was an inevitable reality, that Jesus was the Messiah, that he knew himself to be the Messiah, that everything that the Messiah should do had been planned by God and supernaturally revealed to the prophets centuries before, that the prophecy of second Zechariah referred to him, that he had no volition except to obey, that he studied the stage setting previously prescribed and devoted himself to carrying out its details.

Here are ten assumed premises upon which the great structure of orthodox conclusions is reared, and not one of the premises is true. It is amazing that men do not see that in thus portraying Jesus as simply playing a



part as previously arranged for him they destroy his dignity, detracting from the greatness of his faith, the power of his love, and the supreme sacrifice of his devotion in trying to win the Jewish people into a citizenship worthy of the Kingdom of God.

The disciples and others who had made the long journey from Galilee with Jesus were, as we should say, people carried away by an idea. They believed that the Kingdom of God was really coming and that they were to be the first to share in its victory and joy. For this belief they had given up everything. To them it meant the overthrow of the Roman dominion and the establishment of a new Jewish empire with Jerusalem as its capital and a vaguely perceived new sort of righteousness as its manner of life, while with Jesus the political form of the coming Kingdom was entirely subordinate to the new human life which he anticipated, a life from which all moral evil, poverty, and disease would be abolished and in which absolute goodness would spring up spontaneously like a living fountain from every heart. It was natural that as they approached Jerusalem the enthusiasm should grow and that on the day of their entry it should break out into shouts of joy. Some of them threw their outer garments upon the ass, others upon the road before him, while others cut the green underbrush from the fields and strewed it in the way. There is an interesting matter in connection with this underbrush, which was the ordinary wild growth between the olive trees, such as rushes, or reeds. So it was stated in the earliest tradition and recorded by Mark. Luke did not mention it at all, while Matthew, writing early in the next century and at a distance from Judæa and knowing nothing about the conditions of life in Palestine, states that they cut down branches

from the trees, whereas there were no trees but olive trees, from which no one would have ventured to cut branches. A generation after Matthew the writer of the fourth Gospel, also knowing nothing of Palestine, declared that they were palm branches, whereas there never was a palm tree in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The Jews did use palm branches at the Feast of Tabernacles, but they were brought there for the festival from a place known as the "Iron Mountain." From the two blunders in the first and fourth Gospels the later custom of observing Palm Sunday grew up, and so sure were the King James translators that when Jesus rode to Jerusalem the road was covered with palms that they altered the text of Mark's Gospel to make it correspond with the statement by Matthew, whereas Mark never mentioned either branches or trees. The new version still adheres to the altered text, but suggests "layers of leaves" as a possible reading, but, leaving the impression of palm leaves and ignoring the fact that only olive leaves were available and that they were impossible.

The excitement and enthusiasm of the friends of Jesus broke out into singing the familiar words of the 118th Psalm. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." This was the Psalm assigned especially to the Feast of Tabernacles, to which tradition said was added, "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."

The earliest tradition, therefore, did not represent the disciples and others as proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah on this occasion, their thoughts being occupied chiefly with the glories of the kingdom of David so soon to be restored. By the later tradition, on the

contrary, their enthusiasm was directed to the person of Jesus. According to Luke it was not, "Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David" which they shouted, but "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord," while Matthew thought that they had sung Hosanna to the Son of David. Thus the changes of tradition illustrate the developments of belief.

*Luke xix, 39-44; Matt. xxi, 10, 11*

Luke and Matthew make some additions to the original narrative, which cannot be historical.

Luke says that the Pharisees asked Jesus to rebuke his disciples for their singing, which is quite improbable, because all the multitudinous companies of pilgrims were accustomed to sing some of the Psalms on the last day of their journey to Jerusalem and the valleys and hillsides resounded everywhere with song; nor, if the singing of the disciples and friends of Jesus had been as given in the earliest account, could the Pharisees have objected. Luke says that, when they came in sight of the city, Jesus wept over it, since it was going to be destroyed, because it had not known its great opportunity. This is a prophecy after the event and is entirely unhistorical. Jesus had come to Jerusalem in the hope of winning a multitude to prepare for the Kingdom of God and he certainly had not given up the hope before making the attempt, nor did he anticipate the destruction of the city in which he believed that God was about to establish his personal reign.

The statement in Matthew's Gospel that "the whole city was stirred" cannot be true, because companies of pilgrims were arriving all the time and all of them in a state of great religious excitement. Some of those,

who saw that the enthusiasm of the little company from Galilee was centred upon their leader, perhaps asked who he was and were told, according to the late tradition in Matthew's Gospel, that he was "the prophet, Jesus," from Nazareth of Galilee. If this be a true tradition, it is evident that the most loyal friends of Jesus did not make any claim at that time that he was the Messiah.

§ LVI: *Mark xi, 11-14*

Jesus went into the temple and "looked round about him upon all things." Whether he had ever been there before, or not, we do not know. The preaching of John the Baptist, which awoke his great enthusiasm for the coming of the Kingdom of God, had been a violent protest against the priests and their whole system of religion, but Jesus had done his work in Galilee far away from any contact with them. The "better righteousness" which he believed to be a fundamental condition for admission to the Kingdom of God had led him into frequent conflict with the Pharisees and their artificial righteousness, but apparently he had never mentioned the priests; whereas, if he had ever been to Jerusalem, the sight of its barbaric methods for persuading God to be gracious would have affected him, as it did on this occasion, and he would never have neglected an opportunity for showing that the priestly system was subversive of all religion. On the contrary, he ignored it and, instead of denouncing the machinery of forgiveness, taught simply that love was the measure of the forgiveness of sins. "She is forgiven much, because she loved much" expressed his whole theory of divine forgiveness; but had

he applied it, it was subversive of the Jewish religion.

When he entered the great outer court of the temple the scene which he looked upon gave him such a shock as he had not had before. He had come to Jerusalem full of enthusiasm, courage, devotion, and hope, to tell the people that the Kingdom of God was coming and to win men to such a real transformation of character as would fit them for citizenship; but here was the first great barrier, for this enormous court was filled with cattle, sheep, lambs, pigeons, and men. The confused noise of thousands of animals, the shouting of the sellers, the loud wrangling over prices, the pushing and crowding, the dust, the heat, the odours, the noises, it was an intolerable scene. And then there was the multitude of lesser sellers crying their incense, oil, wine, and spices, and, in quieter corners, the money-changers selling the old Jewish or Tyrian half shekels, one to every man, for the temple tax. The priests would receive nothing else and they owned the entire supply, which was sold to the pilgrims at exorbitant rates of exchange and which, being received by the priests, was at once sent out to be sold again, while they also received a commission on the sale of the animals. The den of thieves was perfectly apparent to any intelligent observer. And yet all this confusion of noise, barbarism, and fraud was in the interest of religion and under the sanction of religion. The Jews were getting ready to celebrate the greatest religious function of the year and they really believed that God had devised and ordered this complicated system of the slaughter of animals as an equivalent for the punishments which otherwise he would feel obliged to inflict upon them. But Jesus, as he looked upon this distressing scene, remembered that centuries before a few

brave men had made manly protests in the name of God against the delusions of a priestly religion.

He recalled that eight hundred years before Amos (v, 21 ff.) had said: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. . . . But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Isaiah, too, had protested against the whole sacrificial system, in the words (i, 11 ff.): "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith Jahveh. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with. It is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless; plead for the widow."

Micah vi., 6, too, had written: "Wherewith shall I come before Jahveh and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will Jahveh be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jahveh require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God"!

These grand protests against a religion of priests might have resulted in the development of high standards of character among the Jewish people but for the unfortunate coalition of prophets and priests in the time of Josiah, which led to the "discovery" of the pretended law and established the priestly system as of divine authority, leading in the following century to the wail of Jeremiah that they had made the temple a den of thieves. All this realisation of what might have been and what ought to be swept in a flood over the soul of Jesus as he looked upon the distressing scene in the temple court and turned with a heavy heart to go to his quiet retreat at Bethany, pondering on what he had seen and wondering what he could do.

Mark breaks the narrative in two places to introduce the impossible story of a fig tree. He had mistaken a parable for an actual occurrence, but Luke, with his greater literary ability, recognised the blunder and did not repeat it, while Matthew undertook to increase the marvellousness. It is evident that Jesus must have eaten before leaving Bethany and therefore was not hungry. He did not expect to find figs on a tree out of season, nor did he get angry at a tree for not bearing figs either in, or out of season, nor did he ever curse a tree. That such a story could be told and accepted shows the puerility of the early Christians and their utter inability to comprehend the high plane of moral and spiritual consciousness upon which Jesus lived.

§ LVII: *Mark xi, 15-19; Luke xix, 45-48; Matt. xxi, 12-17*

When Jesus awoke on the following morning the thoughts which had been working in his mind while he

slept had taken definite shape and it was perfectly clear to him that he must stop the desecration of the temple, the tumult of trading, the wrangling, confusion, and noise and the wholesale robbery of the people by the priests and so restore it to what he believed to be its legitimate uses, making it a house of prayer, a great synagogue, full of a holy quiet, where men might go to think, to pray, to worship, and to learn. It meant to him nothing less than the entire sweeping away of an ancient religion, which had been elaborating its ritual and increasing the power of its priests for five hundred years' ever since Ezra's time, and which sent its roots deep down into the soil of an ancient, barbaric Semitism, the abolition of all sacrifices to placate the wrath or to win the favour of God, the destruction of a priestly caste, the setting aside of all mediators, middle-men, brokers, agents, who came between the soul of man and its divine Father. Jesus could not help realising that to stop the sale of animals was to stop the sacrifices, and that to stop the sacrifices was to make the priests useless and thus to abolish the Jewish religion. That he did realise the full meaning of his act became evident on the following day, when he told the priests that their day was over and that God would let out the vineyard to other husbandmen. What the consequences of his act might be to himself he did not consider. He knew that he was doing his duty and thought of nothing else, leaving the result with God. With this great resolution in his mind he entered the temple court and began at once his work of purification, driving out the cattle, the sheep, the lambs, with their buyers and sellers, the pigeon dealers and the small peddlers, and scattering the coin from the tables of the money changers. It was a wonderful scene, one man against



hundreds, and yet that one winning the day, putting an end to the traffic and stopping all the bustle of ceremonial religion. Jesus had a marvellous presence, a combination of winsomeness and commanding power, which, together with the absolute conviction that he was right made him irresistible. Although hundreds of people had lost by his act, at least their profits for the day, there seems to have been no opposition. On the contrary, he apparently had the sympathy of a large proportion of the people. They knew that they were being exploited and plundered by the priests, and were glad that one was brave enough to resist them, and yet these same people could not be relied upon to stand by Jesus in a crisis. It is always so in priest-ridden countries, to-day as much as then. The people know that they are deceived and plundered and are glad to have the iniquities of the priests disclosed, and yet there is the ingrained belief, inherited from centuries of superstition, that the system which they represent has divine sanction. Just for the time the bold act of Jesus had won for him a multitude of sympathisers, so that the priests did not dare to arrest him, not that they were afraid of the people, but they were afraid of the Romans. To have attempted to have him arrested by the temple police would have created a tumult, and then the Roman guards, always watching from the walls of the fortress, which towered above the temple courts, everything which went on within them, would have given the alarm, and Roman soldiers coming down from the fortress might have desecrated the temple with bloodshed, while Pilate, to punish them for a disturbance, might have refused to let the High Priest have his vestments for the Passover, which the Romans kept locked up and only loaned for festivals as a reward

for good behaviour. The priests had, therefore, to restrain themselves and Jesus went free for the time being, but, as Luke said, "they sought how they might destroy him." It was no longer, as with the Pharisees in Galilee, a question of counteracting his influence. They realised that they must kill him, but the question was, how. The Sanhedrim no longer had the power of life and death. They must either hire an assassin, or find some charge, which would induce Pilate to put him to death. There is not the slightest doubt but that it was this act of Jesus in purifying the temple which roused the hostility of the priests and was the determining cause of his death. The author of the first Gospel, however, undertook to push the event into the background as a matter of small importance, putting it back to the close of the previous day, not mentioning any hostility on the part of the priests as the result of it and claiming that they were distressed only by the number of healings which Jesus effected. All this is unhistorical and can be accounted for only by the fact that early in the second century hierarchical notions were fast creeping back among the Christians, and it had become unpopular to represent Jesus as fundamentally opposed to them.

§ LVIII: *Mark xi, 20-25; Matt. xxi, 18-22*

The remainder of the story of the fig tree again breaks the narrative. Matthew makes but one account of it, since, according to him, the tree withered immediately. Neither account is historical, but the mention of a mountain cast into the sea, as illustrating the power of prayer, is evidence that the original parable, Luke (xiii, 6), was told in Galilee, with both mountain and lake near at hand.

§ LIX: *Mark xi, 27-33; Luke xx, 1-8; Matt. xxi, 23-27*

It was necessary for the priests, while planning in secret for the death of Jesus, to make a show of authority in public and to attempt to regain their prestige with the people, which had suffered a rude eclipse.

There came to him, therefore, on the following day, as he was walking in the temple, a large delegation of priests, scribes, and elders, expecting no doubt to overawe him by their rank and reputation. They asked him by what authority he had acted on the day before and who gave him the authority. He said that he would tell them, if they would answer him one question: Did John the Baptist preach on his own authority, or by divine commission? They could not answer the question, for, if they said that John was under divine authority, he would naturally ask why, then, they did not believe him; whereas, if they said that John was simply a misguided fanatic, they would lose caste with the people who had been greatly impressed by John's preaching, even when they did not become his disciples. They all said they could not tell, to which Jesus replied: "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

§ LX: *Mark xii, 1-12; Luke xx, 9-19; Matt. xxi, 33-46*

Those who came with so much assurance to attack Jesus must have been astounded at finding themselves beaten by the use of their own weapons and still more amazed when, in their confusion, he turned upon them with an allegory, which was nothing less than the pro-

clamation of the end of their dominion. It was one of the rare and memorable crises of human history when Jesus alone dared to face the representatives of a great and powerful religion and to tell them that God was about to take away their prestige and wealth, their reputation and their control over life and conscience, because they had failed to make the vineyard entrusted to them yield its expected fruits. It was a magnificent manifestation of faith and courage and never has been properly appreciated, because the world has been taught to think that Jesus was talking from the consciousness of Messiahship and not from the power of personal conviction.

The allegory, as it has come down to us, is not in its original form, but in a much-developed form to suit the views of a later generation of Christians.

Jesus certainly reminded his enemies that their ancestors had generally killed the prophets, in other words that priests and theologians had generally gotten rid of the men who had tried to bring the people to a better realisation of God and a more genuine spontaneity of goodness and so to emancipate them from priestly control. By implication, they were of the same spirit as their predecessors and God's patience was exhausted. He was about to turn them out of the vineyard and to put more promising men in control. This was an amazing declaration, nothing less than the assertion of his belief that the Jewish religion had come to an end, that the pretended divine right of the priests, their sanctity in the eyes of the people, the enormous revenues which they enjoyed, the majesty of the law which they taught the people had been devised and given by God, the elaborate system of sacrifices for the forgiveness of sins, the prayers, fastings, Sabbath ob-

servances, and alms for the accumulation of merit, all were to be abolished and a new set of husbandmen put in charge of the vineyard, under whose better care it would yield a rich harvest of fruits in the lives and characters of men. All this Jesus said by implication and all this his hearers understood.

It is no wonder that "they sought to lay hold on him" and plotted to kill him. There was nothing else for them to do, since his act of the day before had created a great sensation and won for him many temporary friends.

The part of the allegory which did not originate with him was the mention of the "son" whom the owner of the vineyard finally sent and whom the husbandmen determined to kill, because he was the "heir." This was a later theological allegory added by the Christians. Jesus, in talking with priests and scribes, made no claims for himself as the "son" and "heir" of God; for he not only would not have persuaded them to recognise such claims, but would have weakened his position in making them.

Nor could he have suggested that they would kill him, since, with his great accomplishment of the previous day and his recent victory over the priests and scribes he was not expecting to be killed, but anticipated for himself a large share in the management of the divine vineyard, as well as for his friends, whom he had assured that it was their Father's good pleasure to give them the Kingdom.

The allegory received a still further adaptation to later views in Matthew's Gospel, which makes Jesus say that the Kingdom of God would be taken from the Jews and given to a *nation* bringing forth the fruits thereof. This can mean nothing less than the deposi-

tion of the Jewish people from the control of religion in favour of the new, great Church among foreign people, ideas which never entered the mind of Jesus at all, while the identification of the Kingdom of God with Judaism and then with the new ecclesiasticism of the second century shows how far the Christians had wandered from what Jesus meant by it.

§ LXI: *Mark xii, 13-17; Luke xx, 20-26; Matt. xxii, 15-22*

While plotting for the death of Jesus, it seemed to the priests and scribes that by skilfully arranged questions he might be made to commit himself in some way that would either discredit him with the people or show him to be dangerous to the Roman government. For this purpose two parties, ordinarily hostile, came together and easily found a question which it seemed impossible for him to answer without arousing great hostility against himself from one side or the other.

The Pharisees, as the extreme representatives of orthodoxy, held that it was sinful to pay taxes to the Roman government, since to do so was to acknowledge another sovereignty than that of God, while the Herodians were the court party, whose policy was to be on good terms with the government at any cost. Was it lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar, or no? If he said Yes, he would lose nearly all his friends among the Jews; for, while only the zealots resisted payment unto death, the rest paid their taxes only under protest and conflicts with the Roman government were of frequent occurrence. If, on the contrary, Jesus said No, it would be a simple matter to accuse him to the Romans as a public teacher of sedition. Jesus was

quick to discover men's motives back of their conduct, and flattery did not deceive him in the least. He denounced them at once as hypocritical, tricky, and wicked, and said, "Show me a denarion." The English translation—"penny"—is misleading. The coin for which Jesus asked was not even a copper coin, for the Roman government in taking possession of Judæa had been obliged to yield to Jewish fanaticism so far as to issue special copper coins for Judæa without the head of the emperor, for the Jews had a law which said: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything," etc. The Christian world still teaches this Jewish prohibition of art to its children and reads it as a divine law in some of the churches, but does not obey it, nor expect it to be obeyed. Only Jews and Arabs do that, the latter of whom, at one time, gave vent to their artistic temperaments by inventing the Arabesque which is not like anything in the heavens above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth. The Roman government did not yield to the Jews with regard to the coinage of silver, and it was the common silver denarion which Jesus asked to see. "Whose is this image and superscription?" he asked, "Cæsar's." "Then render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." The coins in circulation showed to whom they were subject and they must pay their taxes to the established government. Jesus was not inciting to revolution. He said virtually that it was right to pay tribute to Cæsar, but he did not stop with that answer, as his enemies would have liked to have him do, for he added that they were also to render to God the things that were God's. There were vastly more important things in life than their idle question about the tribute, and their political vassalage did not

absolve them from their duties as moral and spiritual beings. This was the whole point of the answer of Jesus. Men must discharge the duties which human conditions imposed upon them, while never losing sight of their moral and spiritual relationships. It was a great principle always and everywhere applicable. The doctrine of the separation of Church and State, while altogether true and necessary, was not contained in the answer of Jesus, although it has been deduced from it in many learned treatises. Jesus was not thinking of any such problem as that involved in the relationship of Church and State, nor could he have conceived the idea of two co-ordinate powers, the temporal and the spiritual, which dominated the thought of Europe for so many centuries. He believed that the Kingdom of God was soon to be established in the world, but, while waiting and preparing for it, there was no question but that men must pay taxes to the established government. His questioners were dumb-founded. He had answered their question and yet not in a way which would discredit him with the people, or afford ground for a charge against him in a Roman court.

§ LXII: *Mark xii, 18-27; Luke xx, 27-38; Matt. xxii, 22-33*

Now that the Herodians and Pharisees had been defeated, it seemed to some of the Sadducees that they might succeed better. The Sadducees, retaining in one of their families the right to the high-priesthood, had constituted for several centuries a priestly aristocracy which, while devotedly attached to the law as it had been established by Ezra about five hundred



years before the time of Jesus, had resisted both the additions to it from the multitudinous decisions collected by the Pharisees, and known as the "traditions of the elders," and the beliefs concerning angels, devils, and resurrection, which coming originally from Persia, had, in the later centuries, taken fast hold of a large part of the Jewish people. There were, therefore, frequent disputes between them and the Pharisees concerning the latter beliefs. As it was known that Jesus shared the beliefs of the Pharisees and the common people in these matters, it seemed to them that they might bring him into hopeless perplexity and expose him to ridicule by laying before him one of their favourite problems, over which they had no doubt often wrangled with the Pharisees. They present it to him as a matter founded on the law, saying, "Moses wrote unto us." The law is found in the Book of Deuteronomy (xxv, 5) and dates from the time of Josiah, but it passed as a law of Moses and neither Jesus, nor any one else at the time, knew anything to the contrary. A woman had been in turn the wife of seven brothers. Whose wife would she be in the resurrection? They thought that their question reduced the belief in a life after death to an absurdity.

It was a sudden and unexpected blow, therefore, when Jesus asked them quietly: "Do you not err, because you know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?"

He explained first what he meant by "the power of God." "When they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels, which are in heaven." The answer of Jesus is most interesting, because it probably shows his actual belief, as he had worked it out in his own mind.

The Kingdom of God, which he preached, was to be established in this world, and material things and occupations would continue, only under happier conditions; but beyond the earthly kingdom was a heavenly life in which many of the present conditions would be changed. That the Sadducees did not realise this showed that they did not know the power of God, who, as we should say to-day, was able to adjust life to its environment.

Those of the Jews who believed in a future life had been unable to think of it except in a human body and under complete physical conditions, while Jesus had evidently gone way beyond Jewish thought and had reached a belief very like Paul's later belief in a spiritual body, or like the Greek belief in the immortality of the soul, leaving it to the "power of God" to provide a body which should express the larger personality.

It had become clear to him that, in a world where people did not die, marriage would be unnecessary, since it was only a means for keeping up the population in a world where people did die.

He spoke of "rising from the dead," because that was the expression in common use, but it meant to him very much more than the restoration of physical life, as is evident from his saying that men would be "as the angels," whom he, and all except the Sadducees, thought of as a class of beings of a higher order than men.

His argument from the Scriptures was remarkable. They all believed that God had spoken to Moses and had called himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jesus argued that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be alive, because God would not call himself the God of men who were dead. It was the ordinary

rabbinical mode of argument from the Scriptures. He had beaten them on their own ground, out of their own beliefs, by the use of their own weapons, and finished their discomfiture with the words—"Ye therefore do greatly err."

§ *LXIII: Mark xii, 28-34; Luke x, 25-28; Matt. xxii, 34-40*

Jesus had won a remarkable victory over all parties, and had created a profound impression by the ability with which he had parried the attacks, as is evident from the fact that a scribe came to him to ask which was the first commandment of all. This was an honest man who came with honest intent, and not a "lawyer" who had thought out a new way to entrap him, as Luke and Matthew imagined afterwards. This man really wanted to know what Jesus would say, for there was sometimes a conflict of laws and the question often arose as to which should take precedence. Jesus answered that the great creed of Israel was the first of all the commandments. This was the *Shemá*, so called from its first word. It was recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy (vi, 4, 5) and read—"Hear, O Israel: Jahveh our God is one Jahveh: and thou shalt love Jahveh thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might." This law, written very fine on narrow strips, and enclosed in small metal cubes, was worn strapped upon the left arm and upon the forehead. These were the phylacteries. It was also inscribed upon a parchment roll and kept in a box at the right door-post of every house and of every room. It was repeated night and morning, and yet it was a dead letter, for the Jewish religion was built entirely

upon the fear of God, and what passed among the Jews for the love of God was only a form of race egoism.

Jesus showed by his answer his belief that monotheism, actually realised in the consciousness and developed into a personal love of God, was the foundation of all religion, but he at once added a second law, which he said was like the first: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This was buried and forgotten in the Book of Leviticus (xix, 18). The resurrection of this law and the putting of it on an equality with the law of the love of God made the teaching of Jesus unique in this respect and has always been the great source of its power; for most of the things which the Jews held to be of the greatest importance, laws of worship and sacrifice, of fastings, tithes, purifications, foods, and the Sabbath, were ignored as of at least secondary importance, while the love of God and of man were made of equal importance.

The scribe was surprised. He saw what a complete departure the teaching of Jesus was from the commonly accepted ideas, and yet, being an intelligent and sincere man, he recognised its universal application and wonderful possibilities. His answer shows how completely he had been won. "To love God and one's neighbour is more than whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices." He saw that the teaching of Jesus would abolish the temple, the priesthood, and the sacrifices—in fact, the whole Jewish religion. Jesus recognises the reality of his new convictions and tells him that he is not far from the Kingdom of God.

Luke altered the earlier narrative, so as to make the "lawyer," instead of Jesus, answer the question, apparently to give him an opportunity to ask the

new question—"Who is my neighbour?"—and so to introduce the story of the Good Samaritan. He never hesitated to alter history for the sake of literary effect.

It certainly seems a great misfortune that the whole Christian world, instead of giving the place of supreme importance to this grand teaching of Jesus which covers the whole duty of man, should have given the imperfect Jewish code, known as the "Ten Commandments," the chief place, and regarded the teaching of Jesus as only a "Summary" of it; for the Ten Commandments distinctly recognise polytheism, teach the fear of God instead of the love of God, prohibit art, and do not forbid lying, except that one Jew may not testify falsely against another Jew in court. It is time that the teaching of Jesus acquired its proper place and became the light and power by which men live.

§ LXIV: *Mark xii, 35-37; Luke xx, 41-44; Matt. xxii, 41-46*

No one dared to ask him any more questions, but Jesus became the questioner in turn and, becoming aggressive, began to denounce the absurdities and hypocrisies of the scribes. The only question recorded was apparently unanswerable from the point of view of the scribes. At least, no answer is given. "How say the scribes, he asked them, that the Messiah is the son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost—"Jahveh said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore calleth him Lord: and whence is he then his son?" It is very generally held by the commentators that, in asking this question, Jesus referred to himself and was preparing the way for his acceptance as the

Messiah, although he and everyone knew that he was not a descendant of David, and yet there is nothing in the record to warrant this construction of the question. Considered apart from all preconceptions, it would seem as if this question were intended simply to increase the discomfiture of the scribes.

Jesus never considered himself and made no claims for personal recognition. His whole soul was bound up in the coming of the Kingdom of God and he had no thought for anything else. His acts and words since coming to Jerusalem had had reference solely to that great event, and he certainly did not descend from devotion to his supreme ideal, on the very verge of his apparent victory, to seek to persuade men that he might really be the Messiah, although he did not fulfil one of the supposed requirements by being a descendant of David. His disciples had concluded that he must be the Messiah, but he had charged them not to talk about it. As for himself he did not care whether he were the Messiah or not, and the question did not interest him. If it should please God to make him the Messiah, it would be well, but meanwhile he was interested in what was to him very much more important, the moral conversion of the Jewish people into fitness for the coming Kingdom.

As regards the question itself, both it and the method employed were entirely rabbinical, and the incompetence of the scribes in interpreting the Scriptures being made evident to the multitude in the temple, was most humiliating to them.

Ever since a majority of the Jewish people had taken up the notion of a Messiah who was to deliver them from foreign dominion and re-establish the Jewish kingdom—that is, during the preceding hundred years,

the scribes had been diligent in misinterpreting every possible passage of their older Scriptures to suit the new belief.

As most of the older prophets had prophesied that a new king, generally said to be descended from David, would very soon, in their own day, put an end to the oppression and restore the Kingdom, and as none of these prophesies had been fulfilled, their limitation to ages long past was ignored and out of them a picture was constructed of an anointed king yet to come. The scribes, too, had a very simple and convenient method of antedating the composition of their sacred books. According to them, Moses wrote the Pentateuch and David the Psalms, and not only did they thereby mislead the Jewish people, but, until very recently, their mixture of delusion and deception has continued to impose upon the whole Christian world. The 110th Psalm was written in adulation of a Macbean prince nearly 900 years after David's time, for whom the writer anticipated a remarkable success, but the scribes at the time of Jesus were sure both that David wrote it and that it referred to a Messiah. Jesus did not doubt the interpretation of the Scriptures which he had been taught, but he discovered in this Psalm, as applied to an imaginary Messiah, a problem which would leave the scribes in confusion.

How could the Messiah be the son of David, when David himself called him Lord? They simply could not tell.

In view of these considerations, the popular interpretation that Jesus knew himself to be the Messiah although he was not descended from David, the line being long since extinct, but undertook to show that such descent was unnecessary and, therefore, that he

could be the Messiah nevertheless, is mildly ingenious, but it unfortunately belittles Jesus and derogates from his supreme absorption in a grand ideal.

Another theory which the theologians have developed out of Matthew's version is worse. According to them, and perhaps Matthew so intended to represent the question, Jesus accepted both the belief that he was the Messiah and that the Messiah was of necessity a descendant of David and that he simply propounded to the scribes the theological problem how they would account for it that the Messiah could be at the same time both David's son and David's Lord, hoping that they might discern that the Messiah was to be the son of David according to the flesh and the Son of God according to the spirit, thus laying the foundation for the later ecclesiastical doctrine of two natures in Christ. This is simply theological legerdemain.

§ LXV: *Mark xii, 38-40; Luke xx, 45-47; Matt. xxiii*

It is said, in connection with this question addressed to the scribes and as a result of it, that "the common people heard him gladly," which makes it evident that our interpretation of this narrative is true. The people at large are seldom interested in theological controversies, but they have an unspoiled sense for the detection of unreality and hypocrisy. However subservient they may be to their "spiritual" guides, they know when they are frauds and are glad to have them exposed. It must have been so in this case. Thousands among the Jewish people must have felt, without being able to define, the unreality of their religious teachers, and deep down in their hearts, many of those present on this occasion must have been glad



to see the scribes put into a position from which they could not extricate themselves. Jesus followed up his advantage by turning to them with the words—"Beware of the scribes." He thus completed his attack upon the whole Jewish system of religion. He had already denounced the sacrifices and had told the priests that their day was over. He now turned to the common people and warned them against the theologians, the official and authoritative expounders of the law. There were, undoubtedly, good and honest scribes, for, under any system of religion, there are always men who are better than the system, but the system itself bred hypocrisy and no doubt the majority of the scribes deserved the full measure of the criticism of Jesus. He recalled to the minds of his hearers how they liked to be distinguished by their clothes, as a class apart from ordinary men, how they expected to have deference shown them in public, how they took the most prominent places in the synagogues and expected to have the best seats reserved for them in social gatherings, not for any deserts or value of their own, but simply on account of "the cloth"; and then what frauds and robbers they were, how they went and quartered themselves upon light-minded widows and lived off of them, under the pretence that their prayers would be of great value to their foolish dupes. Having uncovered their hypocrisy, Jesus assured his hearers that their religious teachers, the men whom they had been taught from childhood to revere as the authorised exponents of the law of God, would receive the greatest possible punishment at the judgment which would precede the establishment of the Kingdom of God. It would be impossible for us to realise the effect of such a sweeping denunciation,

nor do we begin to appreciate, at this day, the import of such apparently simple words as—"Beware of the scribes," for they implied nothing less than a complete religious revolution. Jesus appealed from external authority in religion to the internal authority of an awakening and awakened intelligence and conscience. Herein was his greatness as the builder of religion for all time. He realised that it must be the result of a power unfolding from within, the actual blossoming out of the mystery of life hidden in the soul, and not a conformity in belief and conduct to any authority imposing itself from without. Herein also lies the permanent vitality and power of the religion of Jesus, that it asserts the divine nobility of manhood, recognising the right and privilege of every individual to develop his life in accordance with the will of God.

The talk of Jesus to the people at this time was certainly very much longer than the brief compendium of it given by Mark and copied by Luke. Matthew afterwards introduced a long address made up from various sources and from talks on different occasions, and yet some parts of it may have belonged to this talk to the people.

It is not possible, as Matthew states, that Jesus made a distinction between the scribes as authorised teachers of religion and the scribes as hypocrites, telling the people that they must obey them but not copy them. Jesus was too much in earnest to imagine that a bad man could be a good teacher, or that a bad system could produce good results. During the earlier days in Galilee he had come into contact with the additions to the law, known as "the tradition of the elders," and, in opposing these additions, felt that

he was an upholder of the law, but, after seeing more of the scribes and learning the hollowness of any religion which could grow out of their teaching, and especially after having directly interfered with the law of sacrifice by driving out the animals from the court of the temple, he certainly did not tell these people that they must keep the whole law as the scribes expounded it to them. Matthew mistook the earlier attitude of Jesus for his permanent one, ignoring the fact that his thought grew as his experience widened and, furthermore, when Matthew's Gospel was written, the ideas of a hierarchy and sacrifices and ecclesiastical authority had already invaded and pervaded the Christian ranks, so that the altered customs made it desirable for the amended Gospel to show that Jesus was strongly on the side of ecclesiasticism, which is as far as possible from the truth.

According to Matthew, Jesus told the people that they ought to carry the "heavy and grievous" burdens which the scribes laid upon them, although the latter would not "move them with one of their fingers," because they sat in Moses' seat and therefore taught with divine authority. This was a total perversion of his teaching. The criticism of the scribes in verses 5, 6, and 7 agrees with the teaching given by Mark, as belonging to this occasion, but in the 8th verse the narrative of Matthew introduces personal instruction of the disciples which had no connection with his talk to the crowd in the temple.

The long harangue against the scribes and Pharisees, beginning with the 13th verse, is no doubt a fairly accurate record of what Jesus said on this occasion, and was taken from one of the earlier Palestinian Gospels, or collections of the "Sayings of Jesus."

It certainly represents his mood and his attitude at this time, and never in all history was there so terrific an arraignment of the religious guides of a people as frauds in themselves and obstacles in the way of a higher religious development. Jesus recalled with bitterness and grief how, ever since the beginning of his work, these men, who, because they were the recognised teachers and exponents of religion, should have welcomed and believed him and led the way towards a higher religious growth among the people, had not only hardened their own hearts against him, but had used their influence to bar the way for thousands of the Jewish people who would have taken his message to heart and developed a fitness for the Kingdom of God. The same sad experience of Jesus has been repeated many times in subsequent history, since organised authority does not like to lose its power; for, whenever, in the slow unfolding of humanity, the light that is struggling for entrance to the human mind grows brighter and stronger than the limits established for it by ecclesiastical authority, the same pitiful tragedy is repeated again and the religious leaders of men neither go in themselves, nor suffer those who are entering to go in. Nor is there any breaking of the deadlock, except as individual hearts hear the echo of the words of Jesus in the temple—"Beware of the scribes," and then, lest finding themselves adrift they seek new bondage, hear his words to them as disciples—"Have salt in yourselves."

It is not the "meek and gentle" Jesus of popular tradition who called the religious teachers of the Jewish people "children of hell," but a great-souled prophet filled with indignation and wrath against men who abused their authority to prevent the religious growth

of a nation and, as often occurs, made their proselytes models of fanaticism.

How hopelessly corrupt men were who could reduce fraud to a fine art, deceiving the people by swearing by the temple and holding the oath not binding because they had not sworn by the gold of the temple! How completely dead was the moral consciousness of men who made a serious matter of paying tithes on a few weeds out of their gardens and were dishonest in business and unmerciful in dealing with men! Jesus certainly never said about the tithes of mint and anise and cummin—"These ought ye to have done." His recognition of righteousness as a spontaneity, a fountain of living water springing up in the soul, had set him free from the law and all the petty quibbles and applications of its teachers. The writer of Matthew's Gospel, while reporting some of the sayings of Jesus as he found them in earlier records, was very far from appreciating their spirit or import.

How the soul of Jesus revolted against people who could magnify a petty observance and yet did not hesitate at crime; how he hated the hypocrisy which made a show of artificial piety and yet was the mask of a sordid and corrupt heart; and what a tremendous impression there must have been among the crowd in the temple as blow after blow was delivered against their religious leaders and they heard them told, at last, face to face, that they were full of hypocrisy and iniquity!

Jesus believed that the wickedness of all the past centuries would soon culminate in a crisis, the judgment and destruction which would precede the establishment of the Kingdom of God, and no doubt very properly ended his great harangue against the scribes and

Pharisees by declaring that their day was about over and that they were hastening to their destruction; and yet the form in which this is recorded belongs to a later date and shows an adjustment to events which had not then occurred; for the suggestion of persecutions has reference to the experiences of the early Christians in Palestine at a time when Jesus expected not persecutions but the joy and glory of the established Kingdom of God, while the mention of Zachariah concerns an event of the year 67 or 68 A.D., as is evident from Josephus (B. J., iv, 5, 4).

The lamentation over Jerusalem would seem to make a fit ending to this impassioned harangue and was evidently misplaced by Luke (xii, 34). It does not prophesy the destruction of Jerusalem, as many have thought, nor the "second coming" of Jesus, as the theologians have imagined, but declares the overwhelming faith of Jesus in the immediate coming of the Kingdom of God. He had interfered with the sacrifices and had told the priests that God would let out the vineyard to others; he had uncovered the hypocrisy and trickery of the scribes and had denounced them before the multitude. He had thereby thrown confusion into the whole Jewish religion, as both a sacrificial and a legal system. Well might he say to the crowd which heard him in the temple that their house was left unto them desolate! As for himself, he felt that he had finished his work. There was nothing more that he could do, and he would leave the result with God, not returning to the temple until God was ready to introduce his Kingdom and the people of Jerusalem, believing his message, should welcome him with the glad acclamation—"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

§ LXVI: *Mark xii, 41-44; Luke xxi, 1-4*

On one of the days in the temple, Jesus called his disciples' attention to the people as they cast their gifts into the treasury. There were several trumpet-shaped openings on one of the walls, into which money was dropped for different objects. As they watched the passing crowd and saw the ostentatious manner in which many of the Pharisees put something into each opening, there came by a woman, who was evidently very poor, and dropped something into one of them and went modestly away. Jesus judged from her poor appearance that she had given the only coin she had, and made her act an illustration to the disciples of the spirit of giving and the value of gifts. The majority had given something from their superfluity, so that they did not feel the difference, while she had probably given all she had. He certainly did not mean to teach that everyone ought to give away his whole property to be administered by the religious authorities, but that everyone, rich and poor, ought to feel a personal interest in the general welfare and do his full share in carrying the burden of humanity, generously, intelligently, and modestly.

§ LXVII: *Mark xiii, 1-2; Luke xxi, 5, 6; Matt. xxiv, 1, 2*

During the three days in Jerusalem, Jesus had expressed his belief in unmistakable language that the Jewish religion had reached its final crisis and could not develop the sort of righteousness which was required for citizenship in the Kingdom of God. The conclusion was irresistible that the temple, being of no further use, would gradually fall into ruin. The disciples had been very much impressed and, as they left it with him on Wednesday afternoon, called his attention to the great

stones of the outer wall, which had been expected to last for all time. Some of those enormous blocks, more than fifteen feet in length, are among the permanent wonders of the world, and it has been recently discovered that the gigantic foundations were built up at the south-west corner from a depth of eighty feet below the surface of the soil. Jesus is said to have replied to the disciples that the coming destruction would be so complete that one stone would not be left upon another. That he said this is altogether improbable. After the destruction of the city and the temple, the Christians liked to believe that he had foretold both; whereas it was not the destruction but the purification of the temple which he anticipated and, as for the city, he expected it to become the actual dwelling-place of God.

§ *LXVIII.*, *Mark xiii*, 3, 4; *Luke xxi*, 7; *Matt. xxiv*, 3

§ *LXVIII*, I: *Mark xiii*, 5-13; *Luke xxi*, 8-16;  
*Matt. xxiv*, 4-14

The reported conversation with some of the disciples is a composition made up from various sources. Together with some genuine words of Jesus which it may contain, there are evidences of large extracts from some popular Apocalypse, which circulated among the Jews at the time and expressed their beliefs, together with adaptations to later beliefs and ideas. Experiences of early Christian days in Palestine, supposed to have been foretold by Jesus, are strangely confused with popular notions of the woes and calamities which it was imagined must precede the coming of the Messiah and are wrought into the form of a conversation which is altogether unhistorical.



It was part of the popular tradition that wars, earthquakes, famines, and other calamities would precede the coming of the Messiah, and this belief had been the source of much consolation for hundreds of years, enabling the Jews to discover in each new misfortune a sure "sign" of the coming deliverance and victory. Jesus could not have shared the popular belief, because he was so sure that the Kingdom of God would come before his generation had died out that there was hardly time for the development of international wars on any large scale, nor could he have predicted the appearance of false Messiahs, for although he was not interested in the question of the Messiah, as concerned himself, he fully expected to be present at the coming of the Kingdom and to have his share in its joy.

He did not tell his disciples that they would be delivered up to councils and brought before rulers and kings, for he did not anticipate a propaganda outside of Judæa and Galilee. This was an idea of Paul's and was bitterly opposed by the disciples who maintained the true tradition of the teaching of Jesus. His belief was that of the earlier prophets, that the Kingdom of God once established in Jerusalem would be a "light to lighten the Gentiles," who would come to Jerusalem to learn to worship God. He therefore did not tell the disciples that before the Kingdom could come the Gospel would have to be "published among all nations." The idea of a world-wide religion was due entirely to Paul, but, when once it had taken hold of the Christian consciousness and had shown such astonishing results it became inevitable, in the second generation after Jesus, that men should imagine that this was just what he had intended and predicted.

§LXVIII., II: *Mark xiii, 14-23; Luke xxi, 20-24;*  
*Matt. xxiv, 15-28*

This passage is commonly imagined to predict the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, which it certainly does not, for destruction could not be spoken of a "standing where it ought not, nor would people be warned to flee after such an event, but before it." The "abomination of desolation" was certainly a familiar expression, taken from the little Apocalypses which circulated among the people. It had come originally from the Book of Daniel, the Septuagint version (Latin Vulgate, *abominatio desolationis*), (ix, 27), and referred to the wrath and terror which convulsed the Jewish nation when, in the year 168 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes, in his attempt to abolish the Jewish religion, set up a statue of Zeus in the temple and offered to him a great sacrifice. The result was a fearful struggle, which resulted in the establishment of the Maccabean kingdom. The horror was renewed when, in the year 44 A.D., the Emperor Caligula had attempted to erect a statue of himself in the temple and, ever since his day, the Jewish people had lived in a perpetual nightmare of dread lest the attempted sacrilege might be renewed.

The little books which fanned the flames of fanaticism told them that, if this dreadful thing occurred again, they were to flee at once to the mountains, not stopping for anything, nor returning from the field for an extra garment; for it was in secluded mountain valleys that the Jews organised the guerilla bands for the harassing of the legions of Rome. The early Christians, being Jews and intensely Jewish, retained their inherited fuel of fanaticism and easily imagined that Jesus had given it his sanction.

§ LXVIII., III: *Mark xiii, 24-27; Luke xxi, 25-28;*  
*Matt. xxiv, 29-31*

Along with the political terrors foretold in the Book of Daniel (168 B.C.) and the subsequent Apocalypses, were the fearful convulsions of nature, which were expected to precede the coming of the Messiah. If this passage had been of Christian origin, it would have predicted the second coming of Jesus as the all-conquering Messiah. That no such mention is made is evidence that it is simply a popular Jewish Apocalypse adapted and assigned to Jesus by the Christians. It is difficult for us to put ourselves into the mental attitude of these people, who believed all these things literally and intensely and interpreted every event as a possible and probable sign of the end. They certainly had enough in the Parthian war, in the earthquake at Laodicea, in the year 60 A.D., in the eruption of Vesuvius, which destroyed Herculaneum and Pompeii, in the year 62 A.D., and in the wide-spread famine, which desolated the empire in the reigns of Claudius and Nero, to keep them in a constant fever of excitement and terror.

§ LXVIII., +: *Mark xiii, 28-37; Luke xxi, 29-36;*  
*Matt. xxiv, 32-36*

The majority of the Jewish people had learned from the Book of Daniel, which they took seriously, to expect certain unmistakable "signs" of the coming of their anticipated Golden Age.

In response to the question of some of the disciples about "signs," Jesus was imagined to have referred to the two great signs predicted in the Book of Daniel,

the "abomination of desolation," as the sign of the beginning of the "woes," and the coming of the "Son of Man in the clouds with power and great glory" as the "sign" of deliverance and joy. That, however, he was not interested in these popular delusions and did not refer to them is evident from the reported lesson of the fig-tree, which seems the more historically true because it so entirely misinterpreted in the Gospel. A tree showing the ordinary process of nature could not be made to illustrate extraordinary events entirely outside of the natural order, but, when used to illustrate the fact that coming events were already indicated by present conditions, its lesson was simple and clear. As when men found leaves on the fig-trees, they knew that summer was near, so any intelligent observer could see in the existing state of Judaism abundant signs that its final crisis was close at hand. Such was the method of Jesus in teaching and such was undoubtedly his answer to the question about "signs," which he implied were so abundant to those who, being without prejudice, were able to see them that the Kingdom must certainly come, at least within thirty years, but as was always the case with him, he disclaimed all supernatural knowledge. God alone knew when the great event would happen. The words "neither the Son, but the Father" are an addition from later theology. The conclusion from the belief that the Kingdom was certainly coming during the life of the then existing generation and that no one could know when it would come, but that it might come any day, or during any night, was that it was the duty of those who believed the message to be always ready and to watch. This was the final answer of Jesus to the question when these things would

come to pass and what would be the sign of their coming.

*Matt. xxv, 1-13.*

Matthew adds to his report of this conversation three parables, which are alterations and developments of parables told upon other occasions. The parable of the ten virgins is a later outgrowth of a talk which Jesus had had previously with his disciples and which is given by Luke (xii, 35-40) in the words: "Let your loins be girded about and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast."

While the details supplied by Matthew are perhaps not in conformity with actual Oriental customs, the point is nevertheless clear that Christians were to live in a constant state of readiness and expectation. The delay in the coming of the bridegroom, however, shows that the parable, in this form, did not originate with Jesus, but grew out of the exigencies of a later age, when the delayed second coming of Jesus, which the Christians expected, rendered frequent exhortations to constant patience and watchfulness necessary.

*Mark xiii, 34; Luke xix, 11-27; Matt. xxv, 14-30*

Matthew also made some changes in the parable of the talents, as given by Luke. Jesus, in the original parable, had had reference to the coming of the Kingdom.

It would be preceded by a rendering of accounts, for it would be "as when a man, going into a far country, called his servants and delivered to them his goods."

At the judgment, those who had shown ability would be rewarded with positions of increased responsibility and admitted to the great supper which would inaugurate the establishment of the Kingdom of God, for this was what was meant by entering into the "joy" of the lord. The Christians afterwards read into this parable a totally different meaning, imagining that by the "man going into a far country" Jesus meant himself and had reference to his expected ascension and second coming. All Christendom has followed in the footsteps of the early blundering, but we may be perfectly sure that no such thoughts ever occurred to Jesus at all.

*Matt. xxv, 31-46*

The dramatic picture with which Matthew closes this long instruction shows also the adaptation of the original thought of Jesus to the conditions of a new age. A judgment of the whole world formed no part of his anticipations; but, when the rapid spread of a new religion brought with it the belief in a universal judgment as a natural consequence, the teaching of Jesus, when he sent out the disciples to preach in Galilee, was applied to the missionary activities of the Christians upon a larger scale. It was at a time when many were turning away from him and showing serious hostility, under the instigation of the Pharisees, but he assured his disciples that those who were brave and kind enough to give them a drink of water, because they were his messengers, would certainly not lose their reward when the Kingdom of God should come. In later days, when Christian missionaries were often hungry and thirsty and sometimes sick and in prison,

the words of Jesus were recalled and it seemed as if, foreseeing the new state of things, he had really declared that those in the great pagan world who had had compassion on his missionaries and had shown it by giving them food and drink, in giving them clothes when they had been robbed, in caring for them in sickness, and in visiting them in prison, would be counted in among those who should hear the blessed words: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," while the King would say to them in their surprise: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these, my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

This is a most remarkable and valuable record as showing how the spirit of Jesus influenced many of the early Christians so profoundly as to make them recognise that the issues of life were moral, not dogmatic, and that men would be judged by God with regard to their mental and emotional attitudes, their characters and their deeds, without regard to their opinions and beliefs. It was a great misfortune for the world that so sweet a fruit of his teaching succumbed gradually to that of Paul, that the destiny of men depended so greatly upon the opinions, beliefs, and dogmas which they held.

§ *LXIX: Mark xiv, 1, 2; Luke xxii, 1, 2; Matt.  
xxvi, 1-5*

It had been clear to the priests, ever since the attack of Jesus upon the sacrifices, that they must get rid of him and that they must do it without attracting attention, on account of the vast multitude of people from all over the empire collected at Jerusalem for

the Passover. They had seen how much sympathy and support he had won among those already gathered for the feast, and it would be still more dangerous to let him exercise his influence over the greater number still to arrive, but they dared not arrest him publicly, lest his friends should rescue him. Nor had they any right to put any one to death, since the Romans had taken away that privilege. Their only recourse was to hire an assassin or to accuse him before Pilate as a man who was dangerous to the Roman Government. This they might have done and probably would have done earlier in the week, but they were obliged to wait for the arrival of Pilate, who lived at Cæsarea and came up to Jerusalem only at the time of religious festivals, in order to be on hand to quell any riot which might grow out of religious fanaticism. The Passover began on Friday evening. Thursday morning, therefore, was the latest time for completing their plans and finding some way for arresting Jesus during that night and hurrying him off to Pilate and to execution before his friends could be aroused to effect a rescue. The phrase in Mark's Gospel, "after two days," evidently comes from an original and true tradition, and fixes Friday as the day of the crucifixion. In the further account Mark is not true to this date, but makes it seem as if the crucifixion must have taken place on Saturday, which is impossible. Luke and Matthew follow him in this, because, owing to later theories and beliefs, Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples on Friday night, explaining to them at that time that his death was to be the founding of a "new covenant." The author of the fourth Gospel, seeing that these statements could not be historical, went back to the early and true tradition which told



of a supper which Jesus had with his disciples on Thursday night, which was not a Paschal supper, and showed that Friday was certainly the day of the crucifixion.

Matthew's Gospel introduces a statement, which was not in the earlier tradition, that Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified." This is impossible and entirely contrary to the facts. Jesus was resting on Thursday in Bethany after three days of intense strain in Jerusalem. He had not the most remote idea of being killed nor was he conscious of serious danger, until sometime during the day a friend in Jerusalem sent him word that one of his disciples had agreed to betray him to the priests. He had already arranged with a friend in the city for the use of a large room where he could keep the Passover on Friday night with the disciples, which makes it perfectly evident that he was not expecting to be killed. When, however, he heard of the plot of the priests and the treason of one of his disciples, he realised that it was necessary for them to separate and to find their way back to Galilee, either singly or in small groups, but he would make use of the room offered him for one final supper before the separation and would hold it that same evening, instead of waiting for the intended Paschal Supper on Friday night.

*LXX: Mark xiv, 3-9; Matt. xxvi, 6-13*

On one of the evenings in the earlier part of the week the story is told of a woman with an alabaster box of ointment, in the house of Simon the leper at Bethany. The story as given by Mark and copied by Matthew

cannot be true, but is the misplaced and misinterpreted narrative of what occurred on a different occasion. It is said that, when some objected to the waste, Jesus declared that she had done well in using the valuable perfumery as she had, because she had devoted it to the anointing of his body for burial, to which it may very properly be objected that no one would have thought of anointing a body for burial while still alive and, furthermore, that Jesus could not have thought of his burial, because he was not expecting to die. He, moreover, never thought of himself at any time as having a unique claim to personal attentions and lavish expenditure. One could not imagine the disciples sitting calmly by and hearing him talk about his burial as the most natural thing in the world and not being roused to make a single effort to save him from his enemies. They had come to Jerusalem to see the Kingdom of God come and not as passive spectators of their Master's death, nor can one imagine how the woman could have acquired information which no one else possessed. Furthermore, Jesus could not have spoken of the gospel's being preached throughout the world, for that formed no part of his anticipations. The gospel which he preached was the good news that the Kingdom of God was coming, whereas the word as used in this passage means the narrative concerning Jesus, as told by the early Christians and with all the false interpretations which they put upon it. The Christians were very naïve in imagining that Jesus had said that this act of the woman would be spoken of throughout all the world, when, even a generation after the supposed event, no one of them could tell her name. From these considerations it ought to be evident to any one that the early Christians found it convenient

to alter the details of a true tradition, in the interest of their belief that Jesus was the Messiah, so as to make it seem as if a woman had been supernaturally impelled to recognise his Messiahship by anointing him to the high office of the prophet who should show the way of God, the King who should rule in God's name, and the High Priest who should sacrifice himself.

Luke found this story in Mark's Gospel and saw at once how impossible it was. He must, therefore, have made an effort, by comparing various traditions, to trace it back to an earlier source. That he was successful is evident from the fact that he gives an account which is virtually the same and yet is not only free from impossible features, but contains one of the most valuable lessons of all the teaching of Jesus.

*Luke vii, 36-50*

A Pharisee invited Jesus to a meal at his house with some of his friends. While they were reclining about the table, a woman of the town well known to the guests came in quietly and, kneeling behind him, anointed his feet and wept over them and wiped them with her hair. The Pharisee was scandalised and said to himself, This man cannot be a prophet, or he would have known instinctively what sort of a woman this was and would have driven her away. Jesus, seeing what was passing in his mind, said, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee, and he said, Master, say on. A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed him five hundred pence and the other fifty. When they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them, therefore, will love him most? Simon answered and said, He, I suppose, to whom he

forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. . . . Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little; and he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." This is altogether the most remarkable of all the sayings of Jesus and so entirely original and unique that it carries with it the evidence of the truth of this narrative, for it is nothing less than the declaration of a great principle which has been sadly overlooked. Love sets one free from moral evil. The love of what, of whom? This had been a bad woman, bad from force of circumstances. She had not thought of the possibility of any different life for herself. But in Jesus she had seen a perfectly pure life realised and he had thus been a revelation to her of the possibilities of life, of her life. She had listened to some of his wonderful stories of how God forgave his repentant children and welcomed their return and her whole soul had overflowed with joy over the new idealities and possibilities of life which he had opened before her. She had fallen in love with purity and goodness, with her own possible better self, with the God who forgave and the prophet who had shown her the way of life. The new power of love unfolding in her soul had set her free from the force of sinful habit. Her sins were forgiven. This, then, was Jesus' idea of forgiveness. It was emancipation from the power of evil habit through the greater force of the love of goodness working in the heart, a purely dynamic process, in place of the legal method which the Jews imagined. This was what made those who heard him take offence, for they had a complete system, which they imagined that God had devised and revealed, for the forgive-

ness of sins. A prescribed sacrifice offered through a duly authorised priest was believed to be necessary, before God, accepting the payment, or equivalent, or substitution, could grant forgiveness. Men could readily understand this system, because it was so like the way in which favours were obtained from kings and courts in this world, but they could not understand the dynamics of emancipation which Jesus taught, nor conceive of the divine forgiveness apart from all judicial and priestly machinery. Although this teaching of Jesus has stood upon the pages of the Gospel for eighteen centuries, the whole Christian world still adheres to the theories of the Pharisees which caused them to take offence at him. For whether, as with the Catholics, men imagine that forgiveness is dependent upon the sacrifice of the body of Jesus repeated in the wafer, believed to have become his body by the magic of the priest, or, as with the Protestants, they are told that it is necessary to "accept the atonement," believing in the efficacy of the sacrifice "once offered" for the forgiveness of sins, both the great divisions of Christendom stand on the side of the enemies of Jesus and deny one of the most important and fundamental features of his teaching. When the nightmare of Judaism and paganism, which still dominates the Christian world, shall have rolled away, men will learn with joy that what is needed for the higher evolution of the human race is not priestcraft, a mechanism, a judicial process, nor a dogma, but an environment, such an environment of the joy and beauty of righteous living as will win and stimulate the weaker ones to follow where the stronger lead and the method of Jesus for the evolution of life will become the stimulus of millions of hearts: "Let your light so

shine among men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven."

§ LXXI: *Mark xiv, 10-11; Luke xxii, 3-6; Matt. xxvi, 14-16*

Judas undoubtedly betrayed Jesus. A generation later the Christians imagined and taught that Jesus had foreseen the betrayal and consequent condemnation, that he had told his disciples of his expectations before leaving Galilee, that he had gone to Jerusalem with this result in view, and that those who accompanied him had sundered all family ties and given up all property and occupations simply that they might go to Jerusalem to become the helpless and dejected spectators of a tragedy, all of which is absolutely impossible. For, if Jesus knew beforehand what would happen to him in Jerusalem, it could have been only through supernatural knowledge of events which were already part of a prearranged divine economy. But, if things happen in this world as parts of a divine plan and in conformity with a divine decree, then there is no such thing as moral responsibility and no one is entitled to praise or blame for anything. If the betrayal and death of Jesus were parts of a divine plan, then neither Judas nor the priests were to blame, since they became mere passive agents for the execution of divine decrees, and our ideas of right and wrong with reference to human actions become a mere delusion. The Jewish Christians were entirely consistent with the fatalistic ideas which are inherent in the Semitic mind, feeling that Jesus was obliged to endure what was prescribed for him, but, beyond his death, and as a result of it, they imagined a throne, with glory and

authority second only to that of God, and they went so far as to say that he derived courage from selfish motives and power to endure from the "joy that was set before him." (Heb. xii, 2.) This is positively shocking, or would be if we had not listened thoughtlessly to it all our lives. When our Aryan consciousness begins to revolt against the traditional custom of mistaking Jewish thought for a divine revelation, the whole fatalistic scheme, as applied to Jesus, collapses. He did not endure the cross, despising shame, for the joy that was set before him in the prospect of a throne. He did not feel that he was a passive agent, merely playing a part and going through a prearranged rôle. He did not expect to be killed, nor go to Jerusalem for the purpose of being killed, nor predict his death, nor enlist a company to go to Jerusalem as witnesses of it. He believed most profoundly that the Kingdom of God was really coming and coming very soon, that God was coming in person to establish his reign in Jerusalem. He believed it to be his mission to persuade as many of the Jewish people as possible to acquire the better righteousness, which he felt sure was the only means which would admit them to the Kingdom when it came. In Galilee he had failed, losing the multitudes which had flocked to him at first through the work of the Pharisees, who would neither go in themselves, nor suffer those who were entering to go in. He realised, therefore, that there was nothing left for him to do but to attack Pharisaism in its stronghold and, exposing the insincerity, hypocrisy, and trickiness of the scribes, to win the people to the cultivation of a real and personal morality. Arrived at Jerusalem, he found another obstacle in his way, the great sacrificial system of the temple, which, like

all priestly and sacrificial systems, confused and dulled the moral consciousness by teaching that every transgression could be offset by a sacrifice. The sudden and violent interference with the sacrificial system became therefore a necessary preliminary to his subsequent denunciation of the scribes. His acts are not those of a man who is playing a rôle or who is a puppet in the hands of a superior power, but of a man full of faith, devotion, and enthusiasm, sustained and carried along by the heroism and courage of his convictions. It was inevitable, after the first day, that the priests would accomplish his death at the earliest opportunity.

It is quite probable that they were aided in their plans by the defection of Judas. Why did Judas betray him? The feeble reasons which some of the Christians gave afterwards are entirely inadequate. Luke says that "Satan entered into him." If there were a personal devil, which there is not, unless the religion of the Persians, from which the notion came, be a divine revelation, then Judas was not responsible for his deed and all our ideas of human responsibility become confused. Matthew does not seem to be more successful in attempting to discover the cause of the act. He says that it was done for money, that Judas asked the priests what they would give if he would disclose the hiding-place of Jesus and that they agreed to give him thirty pieces of silver. This is altogether improbable; for, if there were any money transaction, it could never have been known, except to Judas and the priests. But that money entered into the question at all is also improbable, for Judas was one of the twelve, which certainly means that he had made all the renunciations and endured all the privations which



Jesus required of those who were willing to undertake the dangerous journey with him to Jerusalem. Judas, therefore, was an enthusiast, a devotee, and his very act of betrayal is another evidence that Jesus had not expected to die and had not told the disciples of any such expectation. Judas had gone with him and the rest in the expectation of seeing the Kingdom of God come with power. If it be worth while to search for the motives which led him to betray Jesus, it is quite possible that his attack upon the priests, his prediction of the end of their régime, and his denunciation of the scribes had caused a revulsion of feeling in Judas, who had expected the Kingdom of God to be a glorification and not an abolition of Jewish institutions and that, being impressed with the venerable sacredness of all things Jewish, he had concluded that Jesus must be an impostor and, therefore, went over to his enemies. Another possible surmise is that Judas, concluding that the expectations with which he had come to Jerusalem were not to be realised, and seeing the danger which threatened to overwhelm him with the rest, determined to save his own life by setting himself right with the priests.

Whether either of these suggestions be correct or not, it is certain that the motive assigned for his act among the early Christians is wholly inadequate to account for it.

§ LXXII: *Mark xiv, 12-16; Luke xxii, 7-13; Matt. xxvi, 17-19*

It was impossible to be in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover and not keep the Passover, and Jesus had intended to keep it. A friend in the city had

apparently agreed to lend him a large upper room, where he and his disciples could be safe for the time from their enemies, which was a great favour, since the demand for rooms far exceeded the supply. The precautions taken to keep the place of meeting secret show that, while Jesus was conscious of danger, he was not expecting an inevitable death. The account given by Mark, and afterwards repeated partly by Luke and entirely by Matthew, makes it seem as if he did keep the Passover and yet he did not, because the Paschal Supper occurred on Friday night and Jesus was certainly crucified on Friday.

If he and his disciples kept the Passover on Friday night, then the crucifixion could not have taken place until Saturday, which is altogether impossible, because Saturday was both the Sabbath and the great day of the Passover, on both of which all labour was forbidden. Therefore, there could have been no meeting of the Sanhedrim on that day, the priests would not have tolerated an execution, no servants of the High Priest would have been allowed to bear arms, no labourer would have been met coming from the fields, no shops would have been open for the purchase of linen, all of which facts are related in connection with the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus. The unfortunate misplacing of the date by the Synoptic writers was due entirely to later dogmatic theories, according to which his death had taken the place of the sacrifice of the Paschal lambs, and he himself had taught that his blood, which was to be shed, would mark the founding of a new religion. These theories originated with Paul, not with Jesus, but they appealed strongly to the Jewish imagination and found support in the later custom of the Jews; for, after the destruction of the

temple, where alone lambs could be sacrificed, they were obliged to content themselves with bread and wine at the Paschal Supper. It was but a step from this for the Jewish Christians to speak of Jesus as the real Paschal lamb and to imagine his blood to be the blood of a new covenant and then to think that he must have said so.

Since intelligent criticism has corrected the blunder of the evangelists, the question naturally arises with regard to a supper on Thursday night, which Jesus had with his disciples. There is abundant reason for believing that there was such a supper and, as precautions were necessary, there is no reason for supposing that it was held at any different place from that which had been offered them for Friday night. Some time during Thursday some friend must have told Jesus, or sent him word, that one of his disciples, he did not know which, had agreed to betray him to the priests. It was a terrible blow to him, because it meant the postponement of all his hopes and showed him the necessity of leaving Jerusalem, going again into hiding, as he had done once before from Herod Antipas, and then beginning his work all over again, unless it should please God by immediate intervention to establish his Kingdom at once. At any rate, he would have a supper with his disciples before they separated to find their way back to Galilee in small groups. For the execution of his altered plan, he sent two of his disciples whom he felt that he could trust, afterwards it was said to have been Peter and John, to tell his friend that he would need the room that night instead of the following night. This is the only possible explanation, unless we are to expunge this whole passage, as without historical foundation. The

apparently supernatural feature of the narrative is pure invention. Jesus had taken all possible precautions and told the disciples whom he sent about the signs agreed upon, but no one else knew them and the Christians supplied them later out of their imagination. Those who were sent undoubtedly made ready a supper but it was not the Passover.

The fourth Gospel afterwards corrected, in this respect, the earlier blunder.

§ LXXIII: *Mark xiv, 17-21; Luke xxii, 21, 22; Matt. xxvi, 20-25*

§ LXXIV. *Mark xiv, 22-25; Luke xxii, 14-20; Matt. xxvi, 26-29*

On the evening of the same day Jesus and the twelve went to the house where the supper had been provided and, as they reclined about the board, he imparted to them the distressing fact which he had learned, that one of their number had turned traitor. They were all shocked and amazed and each began to disclaim for himself the possibility of treason. During the excitement Judas seems to have escaped without attracting notice, for, had the rest known that he was the traitor, he certainly would have been roughly handled, if, indeed, he escaped with his life. Jesus did not say: "The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him, but woe unto that man, by whom the Son of man is betrayed"; for he never thought of himself as the Messiah, nor was there in all the Jewish Scriptures a single passage which any one at that time imagined to mean that the Messiah would suffer and die; nor, even with the defection of Judas, did he expect to be

killed; nor, if for a moment he had imagined that he was only playing a part, could he have cursed another actor, who, according to this statement, was only playing another very important part without any volition of his own in the same divine tragedy. These unfortunate misstatements and misinterpretations by a later dogmatism must all be eliminated from any telling of the story of Jesus which attempts to abide within the bounds of true history.

The treason of Judas, a man whom he had known and loved and trusted, a man who had shown a like enthusiasm with the rest and who had been capable of the same great sacrifices, had been such a terrible blow to Jesus that it had shaken his confidence in all the rest and he did not know whom he could trust.

After the departure of Judas, although greatly depressed, it was perfectly natural that he should do something to test and strengthen the loyalty of the rest, both to the cause which had brought them to Jerusalem, and to himself as the leader in whom they had believed. According to Mark, Jesus "took bread and blessed it and brake it, and gave to them and said, Take, eat, this is my body." His purpose and meaning were perfectly evident. In eating the bread they symbolised their union with him and with each other, all being as closely united as the bread had been before it was broken. The act was, therefore, a renewal of their solidarity, fidelity, and loyalty, a guarantee that there would be no more treason in their ranks. This was what the "breaking of bread" meant to the earliest Christians, before dogmatic theories changed the whole current of belief and practice. It was a frequent renewal of the bond which united them to one another and to their Master, as Paul explained to the

Corinthians (I, x, 16), forgetting for the time his theories on the subject, "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body, for we all partake of the one bread."

Paul, however, gives an account of the supper which varies quite seriously from the tradition current among the Jewish Christians. He says (I, Cor. xi, 23ff) that Jesus "took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it and said, This is my body." So far he agrees with tradition, but then he adds the words, "which is for you; this do in remembrance of me." With regard to the cup, he represents Jesus as saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," a theory afterwards given in Luke's Gospel and in Matthew's, to which the latter adds, "which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Paul also adds the words, "this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."

These words, "as often as ye eat," "as often as ye drink," refer to a familiar and established custom, and, therefore, could not have been spoken by Jesus, nor understood by the disciples.

The words in verses 19b and 20 (Luke xxii) are lacking in many early manuscripts and are, therefore, evidently in interpolation in Luke's Gospel in the interest of Pauline ideas.

Paul does not say for his account that he relates what some of those present on this occasion had told him, but states that he had received it of the Lord, which is certainly an unsafe method for the writing of history, since it is so easy to mistake one's favourite theories for direct divine illumination. The

theory that the death of Jesus was a sacrifice, which made it possible for God to forgive sins, was a fundamental dogma of Paul's theology. Jesus had taught nothing of the sort, but it harmonised entirely with traditional Jewish beliefs, so that it seemed to be a natural conclusion of their theories about him that his death, as the supreme sacrifice, had taken the place of all previous sacrifices and so had marked the beginning of a new covenant between God and man, to take the place of the older covenant which priestly teaching affirmed had once been established through Moses.

If Jesus had expected to die, which he certainly did not, he never would have said that his blood would be "shed for many," or "shed for many for the remission of sins," since his belief concerning the remission of sins was that God forgave those who came to themselves, and those who loved much, without having to be paid for forgiving, and simply because as a father he was glad that the son who had been dead was alive again. It is necessary, therefore, to strike out from the various accounts all references to a supposed atonement or to an imaginary new covenant. The account in Luke's Gospel is of much assistance. He falls into the blunder, which was common in his day and before it, of thinking that the supper was a Paschal Supper; but, strangely enough, he makes no mention of the bread, but represents Jesus as saying, concerning the supper as a whole, what he did say concerning the wine, that he would not any more eat thereof until it should be "fulfilled" in the Kingdom of God. This is, of course, unhistorical, because the supper was not the Passover. As regards the wine, however, he agrees with Mark, and Matthew repeated the same account, so that here we undoubtedly have a true tradition. According to him, Jesus said:

"Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come." Mark says: "until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God," and Matthew, "until that day that I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom."

Nothing but strong dogmatic preconceptions could make it possible to mistake these words. Jesus, from the beginning of his work, had proclaimed that the Kingdom of God was coming, by which he meant, and all who heard him understood, that God was coming to establish his personal reign in Jerusalem. A company of enthusiastic and devoted friends had come to Jerusalem with him to prepare the Jewish people for its coming. One of them had already turned traitor and it was necessary to strengthen the faith and courage of the rest.

They had already renewed their loyalty to Jesus by partaking of the same bread, as evidence that they constituted one body with him. He would also quicken their faith in the cause which had brought them to Jerusalem. Passing the cup of wine, he assured them that before they came together for another supper the Kingdom of God would have come. He could have done nothing so well calculated to revive them, after the shock caused by the defection of Judas, or to strengthen others who might be wavering, and it is impossible to imagine that, having taught the material reality of the Kingdom of God, he suddenly changed all his ideas on the subject and now meant something entirely different, that, after they were all dead and had been resurrected, they would meet at a spiritual banquet in a heavenly kingdom. This would have afforded the disciples no consolation, but,



on the contrary, would have increased their perplexity and distraction from the thought that the very thing for which they had come to Jerusalem had proved a delusion and that Jesus himself had given up hope. On the contrary, his own faith and hope were stronger than ever. He did not think for a moment that he had been mistaken, nor that his enemies would win a victory over him by accomplishing his death, nor that, after going away for a while from the earth, he would come back again. Consequently, having no thought of dying, he could not have said that the bread and wine were symbols of his death, nor that his blood would be shed for the remission of sins, nor could he have told the disciples that they were to make a similar use of bread and wine, nor that they were to do it in remembrance of him, nor that, in doing it, they would show forth his death until his return. All these were afterthoughts among the Christians and had no place at the last supper, which becomes the more evident from the original account in Luke's Gospel, verses 14-18; for, seeing the omission of all the later theories, some one at a later date inserted verses 19 and 20 to make the account agree with the Pauline theology. (1 Cor. xi, 23-25.) That this is an insertion makes it seem probable that verse 24 in Mark's account and verse 28 in Matthew's are also insertions in the interest of dogmatism. With these slight omissions from each of the three narratives, the whole account becomes historical, except for the one mistake that the supper took place on Friday night instead of Thursday, and establishes the fact that, after the defection of Judas, Jesus strengthened the loyalty of the rest to himself by dividing among them the bread, and stirred anew their enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God through the

assuring words which accompanied the passing of the wine. It is an interesting and important question where Paul got his ideas on the subject, which he imagined were due to direct divine illumination.

Some of them, such as the necessity of the shedding of blood for the remission of sins, the proclaiming of the Lord's death by a ritual observance, as a means of reminding God of the supposed sacrificial death of Jesus, and the interpretation of his death as the founding of a new covenant, were due to his Jewish inheritance and rabbinical training.

But in connection with these was another set of ideas, for the introduction of which into Christianity Paul is chiefly responsible. The interpretation of the Last Supper as a Communion Service to be frequently repeated and in which the Christians were to receive the actual body and blood of Jesus, was due to him. Instead of acquiring these ideas by divine revelation, they had been familiar to him from childhood and he had grown up in the atmosphere of them. For all over Asia Minor and throughout the Greek-speaking world, under many religions and in all the Mysteries, these beliefs held a prominent place, the faithful being taught that the bread and wine which they received were the body and blood of a god and became to them the means for absorbing the divine life and acquiring immortality.

Paul's native city, Tarsus, was the headquarters of the religion and Mysteries of Mithras and, although he quite unconsciously combined in his mind many pagan beliefs with his inherited Jewish ones, yet was the source so evident that a writer soon after his day and borrowing his name (Col. i, 26) could refer to "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from

generations, but is now made manifest to his saints."

We may, therefore, confidently expunge from the accounts of the Last Supper all that has been added to them from the ideas of Paul.

*Luke xxii, 21-30*

That this statement of the facts and their interpretation is true becomes the more evident from the account which Luke adds to his narrative. While it is altogether improbable that the controversy about the best positions in the coming Kingdom either took place or was repeated at this time, the fact that Luke could insert it here shows that about the end of the century, two generations after the event, it was generally recognised among the Christians that, when Jesus at the supper assured the disciples that the Kingdom would come before they should have supper together again, he meant and was understood to mean something so real and tangible and so completely within this world that they could fall to disputing about positions, and that he could assure them that they would all eat and drink at his table and sit upon twelve thrones ruling the twelve tribes of Israel. The suggestion of twelve thrones for the friends of Jesus is a later embellishment by the Christians and could not have originated with Jesus, since he had long before told them that the positions of honour were not his to bestow.

Conversation concerning the Kingdom must have followed the renewed anticipations of its coming, although the actual form of the conversation as Luke gives it is due to him and not to any true tradition, since Jesus certainly did not expect Judas as a guest

at his table, nor say that a throne was reserved for him. While the words, as given, cannot be historical, the belief of the Christians towards the close of the first century certainly is historical, as is also the impression which the disciples received from both the words and the act of Jesus; for, recovering from the shock which the act of Judas had caused, faith, hope, devotion, and enthusiasm all came back and they broke out into song.

§ *LXXV: Mark xiv, 26-31; Luke xxii, 31-34; Matt. xxvi, 30-35*

Men do not sing when they are depressed, but only when they are happy, and that the disciples could sing at this time shows that they had entirely recovered from the shock to their beliefs and hopes which the treason of Judas had caused. But it shows much more than this. If Jesus had told them that he was about to die, but that, after he was gone, they might call him to mind and at the same time remind God of his death as a sacrifice which made it possible for him to forgive sins, by frequently dividing among themselves bread and wine, there would have been no singing, but, on the contrary, the most heart-rending distress and a determination to defend his life with their own.

After a severe nervous strain there comes a reaction. Jesus had had a very severe strain both from the grief which the treason of Judas had caused him and from the supreme effort which he had made to revive the faith and loyalty of the rest. After they had left the room and were on their way to a quiet retreat, he seems to have experienced a painful reaction, so much so that he apparently doubted whether he could rely upon

any of the disciples at a critical moment. His depression was certainly very real, and left so much of an impression upon the disciples that the fact must be a perfectly true tradition. Just what he said, however, must have been forgotten, if, indeed, he said anything at all, for at such times it is impossible to talk. Later there grew up a tradition which purported to give his words.

The disciples, undoubtedly, fled after the arrest of Jesus. Later, perhaps as an excuse, it was claimed not only that Jesus had predicted their flight, but that an ancient prophet had foreseen it centuries before. In "searching the Scriptures" the Christians found a passage in the book of Zechariah, which, because it spoke of smiting the shepherd and scattering the sheep, they imagined had reference to Jesus and his disciples. The passage is from the second Zechariah, about 280 B. C., and represents Jahveh as calling upon the sword to smite a bad king, one of the Greek rulers of Palestine, in order that his supporters might be scattered. That such a passage could be imagined to apply to a Messiah, or in any possible way to Jesus, or that he could be conceived of as quoting it with reference to himself, simply illustrates the dull and reckless way in which the early Christians used the Jewish Scriptures.

A like criticism applies to the story of Peter's denial. It is quite probable that Peter, in his fright, did deny any acquaintance with Jesus; but that Jesus could have predicted a threefold denial would imply an accurate foreknowledge of all that was to happen, and this would be impossible unless the whole conduct of life were prearranged and every one acted under the control of some external power. This would do away with all responsibility and make ethics a mere delusion.

We may well believe that Jesus warned Peter of the danger arising from the impetuosity of his nature, but he certainly could not have predicted that he would deny him three times that very night before the "cock-crowing," which was the popular designation for the third watch and did not imply any actual crowing.

*Luke xxii, 35-38*

Luke, fortunately, preserved an account from the earliest tradition, which had either escaped the notice of Mark, or had been suppressed by him, because it did not agree with his theories. According to it, before leaving the room where the supper had been held, Jesus reminded the disciples that they needed to make such preparation as they could for their journey back to Galilee and a very different preparation from what had sufficed for their missionary tour. Then they had been sent out without purses, or wallets, or shoes, and yet they lacked nothing, because those to whom they preached had supplied all that they needed. Now they would have to find their way home through hostile villages, where not only would no one give them food, but they would be attacked and persecuted. They would need to take what money and provisions they had and they would need swords for defence. They would need them so seriously that it would be well to sell their cloaks at the first opportunity and buy them. They were to set out the following morning and Jesus designated the place where he would meet them again in Galilee. The tradition of this fact is preserved in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, but had already been transformed into the popular belief that this meeting was to take place "after" Jesus was risen,

which is manifestly impossible, because all the accounts of the attitude and conduct of the disciples show that they were entirely unprepared for his death and, therefore, that he had said nothing to them about either his death or resurrection.

Luke undertook to soften down the tradition which he had discovered, by making Jesus proclaim the later theory that his death was part of a prearranged plan, but, having discharged his dogmatic duty, returned to the tradition. The disciples found that they had two swords among them and Jesus said, "It is enough." Enough for what? Apart from all dogmatic preconceptions, one would naturally say—enough for present need, enough for protection during that night. When they separated they would need more swords, but in the daytime they could sell their cloaks and buy them. Two would suffice for that night, for what Jesus anticipated and dreaded was the sudden attack of a hired assassin. He had done nothing for which the Sanhedrim could put him to death, if they had had the power, which they did not have. He had never come into contact with the Roman authorities and had done nothing for which they would put him to death. In fact, he had escaped the trap concerning the tribute money, by means of which the Pharisees had hoped to have a cause of accusation against him before Pilate.

It did not seem to him, therefore, that he could be put to death by any legal process; but, knowing that his enemies were determined to kill him, if possible, he expected that they might hire a man to spring upon him suddenly in the night and kill him, but with eleven strong men about him and two swords among them he felt that he was reasonably safe for the night.

It is perfectly evident that, when Jesus stated the

necessity for swords, they were intended for the protection of his own life and those of the disciples, and that therefore both the early Christian theory that he expected to die and the dogmatic designation of him as a "willing victim" are simply the delusions of misguided minds.

§ LXXVI: *Mark xiv, 32-42; Luke xxii, 39-46; Matt. xxvi, 36-46*

Jesus and the disciples went out to the Mount of Olives and came to an olive grove which was walled about and provided with an oil press, from which it was familiarly known as Gethsemane, "The oil press." They seemed to be reasonably safe there, and would have been, had not Judas known of the place, either from having been there with them on previous nights or from having watched to see where they went. By way of precaution, Jesus divided the disciples, stationing the two bodies some distance apart and bidding them keep on the watch, while he went farther into the grove to be alone. They were naturally exhausted from the excitement of the evening and the preceding days, and yet it is incommprehensible that they could have been so dull as not to realise the danger and not to make an effort to keep awake. Inasmuch as they went to sleep, it is evident that they could not have reported what Jesus did or said while they were asleep. They remembered only that when he left them he was suffering from a crushing sorrow. All else, which was afterwards related in current tradition, as to what Jesus said in prayer, represented popular impressions as to what men thought that he must have said and, therefore, reflects not the mind of Jesus, but the



Christian imagination of a generation later. Why was Jesus sorrowful? It seemed to the Christians afterwards, and has so been understood by the majority ever since, that, having a full realisation of the physical suffering which awaited him on the morrow, he shrank from it, and that he begged God to withhold his heavy hand and let him escape it. This was and always has been utterly unworthy of Jesus, but to the multitude, which lives only a physical life, physical pain is the only suffering which it can appreciate. If Jesus had anticipated physical suffering for himself, it would have counted for nothing, for it would have been completely overwhelmed by the awful mental agony which he endured. To have one's ideals shattered, to see one's noblest plans miscarry, to have one's fairest hopes blighted, to have one's heart set on saving a nation and to be condemned, persecuted, and hunted like a criminal, to have to begin all over again when apparently on the very verge of success, these are the crushing griefs which make great souls sorrowful unto death, and it was these things and not the prospect of physical pain which weighed down the soul of Jesus on that dreadful night. For relief and sustenance, for new hope and courage he poured out his soul to his Father. There was no one to understand his suffering, nor to give him a single word of human sympathy and, when men told of it afterwards, physical suffering was the only thing which impressed them. Jesus always prayed to God as "Father" and he prayed in Aramaic, but he did not add the translation of "Father" into Greek. This was a custom which Paul adopted for the benefit of his Greek readers, who would not have known what the Aramaic word meant. That Mark followed Paul's custom in giving this prayer shows

that it was a purely artificial construction. Luke afterwards saw the incongruity of adding the Greek translation and left it out. Other elements show the artificialness of the account. Doubtless Jesus had said to the disciples many times previously, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." It would have been altogether out of place on this occasion, because it was not then a question of temptation, but they had been put on guard to protect their Master against a sudden attack, while the expression, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" is peculiarly Pauline.

There is one feature of this reported prayer which cannot be overlooked. That the Christians could have developed a tradition that, on this Thursday night Jesus prayed that the "cup" might pass from him shows that it was not originally held that he had come to Jerusalem in anticipation of and for the purpose of being killed, but that the turn which events had taken and the danger which threatened him were entirely unlooked for; and, therefore, that all accounts which represent him as predicting his death are simply elements of a later theory put back into the Gospel narrative and must all be eliminated in the interest of true history. Luke introduced the legend of an angel to make it appear that while God required the death of Jesus he would give him strength to endure the pain; but the grief of Jesus would have been increased a thousand-fold could he have foreseen a Christian world really believing for hundreds of years that God did require his death, so that, having received satisfaction, he might be able to forgive sins. This was the Jewish conception of God, against which Jesus had striven with all his might and for which he had tried to substitute the divine Father, whose nature impelled him

to forgive all the children who returned to him in loyalty and love. The Christian world has contented itself with the Jewish God who demanded a price.

The artificialness of this narrative is further shown in the last verse, for Jesus could not have said in the same breath, "Sleep on now and take your rest. Rise, let us be going." While the disciples had slept, Jesus, in prayer to God, had acquired strength and calmness for whatever new trials might come.

§LXXVII: *Mark xiv, 43-52; Luke xxii, 47-53; Matt. xxvi, 47-56*

In the stillness of the night Jesus heard a mob coming and knew what it meant. Rousing the sleepy disciples, he told them that the traitor was at hand. It would appear that Judas had watched to see where Jesus and the disciples went, and having seen them quietly settled for the night, had hurried off to tell the priests where he might be found. The priests, hastily collecting some of their servants and providing them with swords, had put them in charge of an officer of the High Priest and sent them with Judas. On their way they were joined by some of the ordinary night marauders armed only with sticks.

When the two bodies faced each other there must have been a brief moment of indecision, as it were to gauge each other's strength, after which Judas, stepping up to Jesus, gave him a kiss, as the sign agreed upon to show the one whom they were to take. Just what happened after that we cannot tell. The disciples were too much dazed and frightened to give any intelligible account of it afterwards. We do not know how large the mob was, but the narratives show that the disciples

made no fair attempt at defence or rescue. Tradition says that one of them cut off one of the leader's ears, which a foolish legend adds was immediately restored to its place and healed. But mobs do not stop to have miracles wrought, nor for the making of harangues such as the Gospels narrate. They do their work quickly and roughly. What Jesus is reported to have said is therefore largely, if not wholly, the work of later apologetics. The Christians found it necessary in preaching their belief that he was the Messiah, to explain how the Messiah could have suffered disgrace and death and, in doing so, had recourse to misinterpretations of Scriptures, which they imagined to refer to the Messiah. In these accounts of the arrest, Jesus is represented as explaining to a mob of rough men, mostly slaves and vagabonds, that their act in attacking and arresting him was in fulfilment of ancient prophecies, which is absurd and puerile. He certainly did not take them to task for not having arrested him in the daytime, in the temple, for then there would have been too many to defend him and a riot would have ensued, nor were the High Priest's servants doing anything except to execute their orders.

There were no "chief priests," nor "captains of the temple," nor "elders" present, as Luke afterwards imagined. The chief priests and elders were waiting in the house of the High Priest for the bringing in of Jesus, and the captains of the temple were not expected to do duty outside the temple precincts. Jesus certainly did not upbraid the disciples for using one or both of the swords which they had with them, since only a few hours before he had bidden them to procure swords and for the very purpose of protecting him. At that time he had said that two swords were enough,

and they certainly would have sufficed in good hands with the help of nine other strong men against the attack of one or two hired assassins. Jesus had not anticipated an arrest, because he had no thought of the possibility of a legal process. He, therefore, had not expected to defend himself against a mob, but he quite probably told the disciples, after a brief conflict, that further resistance was useless. A few hours before the disciples had apparently all declared their willingness to die with him, if necessary; but, when the crisis came, "they all forsook him and fled." At least, such is the early tradition and it is apparently true, for there is no evidence of the presence of any of them in Jerusalem after this night, with the possible exception of Peter, although the supposed prediction of their flight by the second Zechariah may have affected the tradition. Luke suppressed the story of the flight altogether, because it conflicted with his theory that the disciples all remained in Jerusalem, where they became immediate witnesses of the resurrection.

§ LXXVIII: *Mark xiv, 52, 54; Luke xxii, 54, 55; Matt. xxvi, 57, 58*

When the hastily gathered band of slaves had set out upon their errand to arrest Jesus, the High Priest notified such of his party and of the scribes as could be conveniently reached in the night. Those who went to the palace in response to the notice did not constitute a legal session of the Sanhedrim for a criminal trial, since the law (Mischna, Tract. Sanhedrim) expressly provided that in criminal cases two trials must be held, both in the daytime and a day apart, that, if the accused were adjudged guilty at the first

trial, the twenty-three judges must remain together for twenty-four hours, discussing the case in pairs, eating little, drinking no wine, spending the whole night in the interchange of opinions and reopening the court on the following morning. Moreover, court could not be held on the day before the Sabbath, nor on the day before a feast. As none of these conditions were complied with, it becomes evident from the account itself that there was no trial before the Sanhedrim; for, although a second session after day-break is mentioned, it was not in accordance with the law, since it was held on the same day as the supposed first trial. Jesus could not have been brought to the High Priest's house before midnight and, as the Jewish day began at sunset, it was already Friday, on which, it being the day before the Sabbath and before the Passover, no trial could be held.

Paul, who believed that the Jewish law had been abrogated by the death of Jesus, would have had an overwhelming argument against it, if he could have shown that he had been condemned in accordance with its provisions. Had he heard that such was the case, he certainly would not have written to the Romans that the law was "holy and just and good," which makes it apparent that the story of a trial was not an early tradition, but a later growth, and that it is therefore not historical, but purely imaginary, and with an apologetic motive, for the desire certainly grew up, as the new religion spread into foreign lands, to excuse the Roman Government as far as possible for its share in the death of Jesus and to lay all the blame upon the Jews.

There is a still further reason for regarding a Jewish trial as a work of the imagination, since the Sanhedrim

would have accomplished nothing by a trial and condemnation of Jesus, for, in case of a condemnation to death, they could not execute their verdict. The Romans had taken away their right of putting any one to death, nor was Pilate disposed to ratify such verdicts as they might render on matters connected with their law. A trial, therefore, on their part would have been absolutely without result. Moreover, had there been a trial, there was no friend of Jesus present to relate afterwards what had occurred. The disciples had fled and, had they followed, they would not have been admitted to a room in the palace where priests and scribes were assembled. Peter, who is said to have followed Jesus at a distance, was obliged to remain with the servants and, therefore, had no means of knowing what was said or done. From these considerations, that a criminal trial required two days, that it could not have been held on Friday, and that it could have accomplished nothing if held, we must conclude that there was no trial. On the contrary, we may be very sure that the priests had everything arranged before Jesus was brought in, that only a few were notified of his arrest, and that they hurried with their prisoner to Pilate as soon as he opened court, preferring before him the only charge on which he could be persuaded to condemn Jesus to death, that he was a pretender to the Jewish throne and that he already had a large following and might at any time become troublesome to the Roman Government.

§ § LXXIX, LXXX: *Mark xiv, 55-65; Luke xxii, 63-71; Matt. xxvi, 59-66*

Although, for the reasons given, there could have

been no trial of Jesus by the Sanhedrim, it seemed to the Christians of a later generation that something like a trial must have taken place, and the lack of information gave free play to phantasy in relating the grounds on which he was condemned. It is quite possible that some of them, believing, as they all did, that he was the Messiah and that nearly everything in their Scriptures referred to him, found a suggestion as to the course of the trial in the 27th Psalm, which refers to the people of Israel as a whole, "False witnesses did rise up against me."

However that may be, a story of false witnesses, whose testimony did not agree, became current among them about a generation after the event. One of the reports, as given later in its simplest form by Matthew, related that he had said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days." It is quite impossible that he said it, since such a statement would have been entirely out of accord with his nature and his custom.

Mark, moreover, while saying that the witnesses did not agree, was disposed to believe the validity of this charge, but explained it as a prophecy on the part of Jesus that a new religion, a temple not made with hands, and therefore built from human hearts, would take the place of the Jewish religion represented by the temple built by hands. This idea he had acquired from Paul, with whom Christians had become a "temple of God." The author of the fourth Gospel afterwards, believing that Jesus had said these words, thought that he had reference to his own body which would be restored "after three days."

An actual historical foundation for such a charge may have existed in the popular interpretation of



what Jesus had really said to the priests, that the vineyard would be taken away from them and let out to other husbandmen. It was believed to have constituted part of the "reviling" while he was on the cross and afterwards was the charge brought against Stephen, while a recently discovered fragment of the Gospel of Peter says: "We hid ourselves, because they hunted for us as criminals and as people who were trying to burn the temple."

According to Mark and Matthew nothing was gained by means of false witnesses, while Luke omitted the whole account of a sitting of the Sanhedrim during the night.

While there was undoubtedly a tradition among the Christians concerning false witnesses who did not agree, they seem to have settled down upon the belief that Jesus was really condemned to death by the Sanhedrim for blasphemy, but herein they showed themselves quite as unfamiliar with the provisions of the Jewish law as in supposing that a legal session could have been held at all under the circumstances.

Blasphemy, according to Lev. xxiv, 16, was punishable by death, and the crime of blasphemy was fully defined in Mischna, Sanhedrim, ch. vii. According to its provisions, a blasphemer is not legally guilty unless he has spoken the name of Jahveh. At the trial it was strictly provided that witnesses must use some other name in referring to God, in order to avoid repeating the blasphemy. Even after condemnation, all whose presence was not absolutely necessary being excluded from the court, the oldest of the witnesses was asked to say aloud what he had heard. At the moment when he spoke the holy name the judges were to spring to their feet and tear their clothes.

Other witnesses answered only, "I agree with him."

According to this law, Jesus was guilty of no blasphemy and could not have been condemned for blasphemy by the Sanhedrim. Mark says that the High Priest asked him, "Art thou the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed," and Matthew, "I adjure you by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Messiah, the Son of God." According to Mark, Jesus replied: "I am, and you will see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of Heaven." Matthew gives virtually the same answer and Luke a similar statement, but not in answer to a question. It must be recognised, however, that the priests and scribes were determined to have Jesus put to death, if possible, and that they did not care in the least whether he were the Messiah or not. Nor could any claim on his part to be the Messiah have constituted a ground for a condemnation to death.

Any man might claim to be the Messiah, and, if he could not prove his claim, might be punished as an impostor, but not be put to death for blasphemy. If Jesus had said at this supposed trial that he was the Messiah and that he would sit at the right hand of God and come in the clouds of heaven, these were inevitable prerogatives of the Messiah and contained no blasphemy. Even if the High Priest had asked him if he were the Son of God and Jesus had said that he was, even then there could have been no blasphemy, for, as used by the Jews, the expression Son of God was simply an equivalent term for Messiah, with none of the metaphysical and theological meaning which pagan Christians afterwards put into it.

Since, therefore, a condemnation for blasphemy

cannot be historical, it becomes evident that a motive of Christian apologetics underlies the whole account. The Christians based their entire propaganda on the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, to which, by the time the Gospels began to be written, they added a belief that he was the Son of God, which, among foreign converts, was taken literally.

If they could show that Jesus had accepted both designations for himself at the crisis of his life, they seemed to have the strongest evidence for the truth of these beliefs. Hence, we have the supposed trial and supposed blasphemy, but both of them unhistorical; since a trial could not have been legal, a verdict would have been useless and blasphemy was not proved.

According to Mark, after the High Priest had declared the blasphemy and had rent his clothes and they had all adjudged Jesus to be guilty of death, "some began to spit upon him and to cover his face, and to buffet him and to say unto him, Prophecy! and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands." While the *odium theologicum* is the source of the most extreme malice and cruelty known to the human heart, one could hardly imagine the foremost men of a nation, its chief priests, doctors of law, and pillars of orthodoxy descending to coarse brutality.

Luke gives a more intelligible account. According to him, there was no session of the Sanhedrim during the night, but Jesus was kept in charge by those who had arrested him, either in the court or in the guard room of the palace, where it is quite possible that the coarse nature of slaves might have vented itself in brutal horse-play upon a defenceless prisoner. While there may have been, thus, an historical foundation for this account, the Christians, no doubt, found much

consolation and strong confirmation of their views through their ingenious discovery that everything happened just as they supposed it had been foretold; for they discovered in the prophecy of Micah (v, 1) a passage referring to an unjust ruler of the eighth century before Christ: "they will smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek," also two passages in the writings of the second Isaiah, the prophet of the exile, concerning the faithful Jews, known collectively as the suffering servant of Jahveh: "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting" (Is. 1, 6) and, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not." (Is. liii, 3.) While, therefore, rough treatment of Jesus by the slaves during the night is quite possible, the Christians undoubtedly discovered the details of the brutality in their misinterpretation of the Scriptures, among other blunders changing the hiding of the faces, so as not to see the sufferings of the servant of Jahveh, into a blindfolding of Jesus.

Luke relates that there was a single session of the Sanhedrim, as soon as it was day, at which Jesus was asked to tell them if he were the Messiah, to which he is said to have answered: "If I tell you you will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go." This is almost a repetition of the scene between Zedekiah and Jeremiah, after the latter had been rescued from the dungeon: (Jer. xxxviii); "and the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me. Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not surely

put me to death? and if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me?" Although Luke represents Jesus as declining to answer the question, he immediately makes him answer it, almost in the identical words of the account of Mark, adding also his claim to be the Son of God in the sense of the later theology, which is a manifest anachronism; for, while the priests would have been greatly shocked at any such interpretation of the term "Son of God" as it acquired later among the Christians, it had no such meaning for them and, therefore, they could not have declared, "What need we any further witnesses?" meaning that Jesus was self-condemned. Luke apparently had learned enough of Jewish procedure to know that there could have been no legal session of the Sanhedrim and no condemnation of Jesus for blasphemy if there had been.

Setting aside, therefore, all accounts of a trial as due to the phantasy and apologetic motives of later Christians, we find as the actual facts of history that Jesus was brought to the palace of the High Priest during the night, presumably not long after midnight, and was guarded by the slaves who arrested him, and that they possibly beguiled the time by the brutal treatment of their prisoner.

§ LXXXI: *Mark xiv, 66-72; Luke xxii, 56-62; Matt. xxvi, 69-75*

The denial of Peter must be an historical fact, since it never would have been invented by the Christians to his detriment, and as the story could have been told by none but Peter himself, it becomes good evidence as to what did and what did not happen during at least

part of the night. He undoubtedly followed Jesus at a distance and, seeing that there was quite a crowd of slaves and guards in the court-yard of the High Priest's palace, ventured to enter, hoping to escape notice while watching the course of events. It is related that a maid belonging to the palace recognised him as one of the disciples of Jesus, but that he denied the fact; that later the same, or another maid, repeated the statement, but that he denied it again and that, finally, several declared that it must be true, since his speech showed him to be a Galilean, whereupon he began to curse and to swear, declaring that he had no acquaintance with Jesus. All accounts agree that, at this third denial, a cock crowed; Mark related that he also crowed after the first denial. Luke alone adds that "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter," who then "remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice."

The important fact in these accounts is the statement by Luke that "the Lord turned and looked upon Peter." Luke must have had some good ground for making this statement and, if it may be taken as historical, it makes it apparent that there was no trial going on before the Sanhedrim, but that Jesus was in a guard room opening out of the court, where he could turn and look upon Peter. This is important testimony to the fact that there was no trial. It is idle in this connection to try to save the account of the trial and to rest it upon Peter's testimony, by claiming that the "maid" related to the by-standers, in his hearing, all that was going on in the court above; for, not only is no such statement made in the Gospel narrative, but one could not imagine a maid going in and out

at pleasure during a session of the Sanhedrim and running down to the court to relate to the rough crowd what was passing before that dignified body.

Peter must have related afterwards that the time when, realising what he had done, he went out and wept bitterly, was about the "cock-crowing." Years afterwards the foreign Christians, knowing little or nothing about Jewish law or custom, took the statement literally and imagined that there was a real cock that crowed. That this cannot have been the case is evident for two reasons. In the first place it was contrary to law to keep hens in Jerusalem and, in the second place, the night was divided into four watches, beginning at six P.M., and known respectively as *late*, *midnight*, *cock-crowing*, *early*. As a designation of time, the end of the watch was meant and, therefore, the cock-crowing would stand for three o'clock in the morning. The supposed cock-crowing appealed to the imagination of the Christians, as its supposed prediction by Jesus appealed to their love of the marvellous. They had fallen so completely into the habit of using misinterpretations of prophecy as materials for constructing his life that, finding no prophecy about the cock-crowing, they were obliged to invent one and assign it to Jesus, not realising in the least, on account of the extreme fatalism of the Semitic mind, that, if Peter's denial could have been foretold, it must have been foreordained and, if foreordained, Peter was not to blame.

Peter's denial, due to the fright and cowardice of a weak character, remains a fact, but not the prediction of it, nor the fantastic accompaniment of an actual cock-crowing.

§ LXXXII: *Mark xv, 1-5; Luke xxiii, 1-5; Matt. xxvii, 1, 2, 11-14*

From the time when Peter disappeared from the court of the High-Priest's palace until Jesus hung upon the cross there was no eye-witness, on the part of the Christians, to relate the course of events. They were, therefore, compelled to imagine them, and afterwards they related what they thought must have happened, as if it actually did happen.

They knew that some of the Jewish authorities took Jesus to Pilate, with a request for his condemnation, and that Pilate condemned him. More than this they did not know and, in considering the details of the narrative as they supplied them, we are not dealing with history, but only with Christian impressions. The lack of positive information was the less seriously felt because they were so sure that everything had been predicted in their Scriptures centuries before. The fifty-third chapter of the book of Isaiah furnished, according to their views, abundant information, and when they read in the seventh verse: "He was oppressed and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth," they were able to record with the confidence of eye-witnesses that Jesus made no reply to most of the questions asked him either by the priests or by Pilate.

Mark says that "in the morning," that is, soon after six o'clock, for here he uses the term for the fourth watch, the chief priests, having come to an agreement, bound Jesus and carried him away and delivered him to Pilate. The English translation "held a con-



sultation," is bad. The translators ignored the participle, perhaps to make the translation agree with the statement by Matthew.

It was a very serious undertaking for Jews to surrender one of their own nation to the Roman Government for punishment and could only be done as quietly and hurriedly as possible in order to avoid a tumult.

The priests were brought to their act by the instinct of self-preservation. Ever since Jesus had interfered with the ritual of the temple and had told them publicly that their day was over, while he was visibly winning an ever-increasing sympathy from the crowd, they had realised that nothing but his death would save their prestige and protect their revenues. As they could not put him to death legally, their only recourse was to a hired murderer or a condemnation by the Roman Government. An assassination would have been easily arranged, but, had it been discovered that they were the instigators, the crime would have recoiled upon them and brought them into ill repute with a large proportion of the Jewish people. The only thing left for them, therefore, was to persuade Pilate to put Jesus to death, and in such a way that it might seem to be an act of the Roman Government, with which neither priests nor Pharisees had had anything to do. While they had intended to wait until after the Passover, when the crowd would be gone, we may be sure that, when the opportunity came to them unexpectedly to arrest Jesus, they acted quietly and did not summon the whole Sanhedrim, nor many of its members, but a few of those who had been planning to accomplish his death, that the final arrangements might be quickly decided upon and their prisoner hurried to Pilate with as little demon-

stration and as early in the morning as possible. Mark, therefore, entirely misunderstood the situation when he wrote that the whole Sanhedrim accompanied Jesus through the city to the court of Pilate. Of all things, those in the plot wanted to avoid notice, and the little company of priests which repaired to Pilate's court certainly did not accompany Jesus, but, sending him under guard, went quietly, two by two, by other routes. Of all men among the Jewish people, the priests and their party, the Sadducees, were the only ones who could ask a favour of a Roman procurator, for they alone were on friendly terms with the Romans. A foreign government did not interfere with the power of the priests over the masses, nor curtail their revenues, but rather protected them, while they, in turn, aided the Romans by restraining the popular impulses towards revolt. The priests could thus the more readily persuade Pilate to do them the favour of putting Jesus to death, on the ground that he was a pretender to the Jewish throne and might at any time stir up a revolution. That this is what they actually did is apparent from the inscription on the cross: "The King of the Jews." What happened when Jesus was before Pilate we do not know. He certainly did not claim to be a king, since he had never made any such claim for himself and knew perfectly well that he was not descended from David. This statement is due to the later Christian belief. If Pilate asked any questions, we may be sure that he answered grandly and wisely, his supposed silence being due entirely to the misapplied prophecy. Luke suppressed the story of the silence, but imagined a crowd of people present in addition to the priests and that, after Jesus had acknowledged himself to be a king, Pilate declared

to all assembled that he found no fault in him, both of which statements are incredible.

*Luke xxiii, 6-12*

Luke only introduces at this point a story which is so absolutely improbable that it may be set aside at once as having no foundation in fact. According to him, Pilate suspended the trial, in order to send his prisoner to Herod Antipas, who had come up to Jerusalem for the Passover.

Later some one added the tenth to the twelfth verses, which state that the chief priests and scribes followed to lay their accusations before Herod, who, after asking a few questions to which Jesus made no reply, fraternised with his soldiers in abusive sport and, arraying Jesus in "gorgeous apparel," sent him back to Pilate.

In considering these statements, we cannot remind ourselves too strongly that it was necessary for the priests to execute their crime as speedily and as quietly as possible, and that Pilate understood as well as they the need of avoiding any act which could excite the vast crowd of pilgrims brought together for the Passover, a majority of whom were at the white heat of religious fanaticism. Pilate, therefore, did not attract attention to Jesus by sending him to Herod Antipas, nor can one imagine a Roman procurator, who represented the majesty of the emperor, thinking so lightly of his dignity as to recognise the equal jurisdiction of the tetrarch of a subject province.

If it be worth while to enquire how Luke came to make these statements, it seems probable that since the name of Herod was a permanent source of terror

among the more ignorant Jewish population, a tradition had grown up among them that Herod the Great had been partly guilty of the death of Jesus. Luke, apparently, from his better knowledge of history, undertook to set the matter straight by showing that it was not Herod the Great, but Herod Antipas, who, through the courtesy of Pilate, became connected with the death of Jesus. However this may be, the account as it stands is unhistorical.

§ *LXXXIII: Mark xv, 6-15; Luke xxiii, 13-25; Matt. xxvii, 15-26*

Up to this point in the narrative the plot of the priests has been carried on quietly and without attracting any notice. Mark had already stated that two days before, when they began to make plans for the death of Jesus, they had said: "Not during the feast, lest haply there shall be a tumult of the people." Now circumstances had thrown Jesus into their hands on the very day when the feast was to begin. It was necessary to take every precaution to avoid attracting the attention of the public to their crime and this they certainly had done; but suddenly the narrative introduces a great crowd upon the scene and Pilate is represented by Luke as addressing himself to "the chief priests and the rulers and the people," saying to them: "Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him . . . . I will, therefore, chastise him and release him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this

man and release unto us Barabbas." It was an old Jewish custom to release a prisoner at the Passover and it is quite possible that the Roman Government retained the custom and released a political prisoner at that time. Most prisoners were political prisoners, since Jewish politics were inseparable from deeds of violence. It is also possible that a party may have come to ask the release of Barabbas while Pilate was busy with the case of Jesus, yet other features of the narrative make it seem altogether improbable that the two events coincided in time.

Who was Barabbas? We do not know. The name means, apparently, "Son of a Teacher," and would imply that he belonged to the higher classes and was a popular favourite. The earliest account by Mark states that during a riot he had killed a man, perhaps in self-defence or by accident. Luke makes it appear that he was a leader of sedition and was properly under indictment for murder; Matthew, that he was a prisoner of some prominence; while by the time the fourth Gospel was written he had become an ordinary "thief" and "robber."

It was a part of the early Christian apologetics, as the new religion spread throughout the empire, to make it appear that the Roman Government had found Jesus not guilty and that his death was due entirely to the Jews, and not to the priests only, but to the whole Jewish nation.

In working out this theory, Mark makes it appear that in his effort to set Jesus free, Pilate appealed from the priests to the people and that, in pursuance of the custom, real or supposed, of liberating a prisoner at the Passover, he proposed to set Jesus free. Mark then assumes that the priests forgot their dignity and

risked their reputation by going among the crowd and instigating them to demand the release of Barabbas, upon which Pilate asked the crowd what he should do with Jesus, and finally acceded to their sentence of crucifixion. No one, however, with a fair amount of judgment and historical consciousness, could imagine a Roman procurator consulting a crowd as to the administration of justice and deciding cases in response to popular clamour. Roman justice often miscarried, but it was not administered after this fashion, while the utter impossibility of the whole account is made the more evident by the embellishment in Matthew's Gospel, where it is related that, in yielding to the clamour of the mob, Pilate "took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it."

This was a Jewish custom prescribed by law (Deut. xxi, 6, 7) but no one, unless afflicted with the most extreme naïveté, could imagine a Roman doing anything of the sort, nor is it possible to think that Jewish priests could so entirely forget their own interests as to incite a crowd of Jews to demand the death of one of their nation at the hands of the Romans. On the contrary, it was the policy of the priests to keep out of sight and not to appear to have acted at all.

The story of Barabbas and of the demand for his release may be perfectly true, but not in connection with the condemnation of Jesus. It was the release of the one and the condemnation of the other, presenting as they did a striking and tragic contrast, which brought the two events together in the Christian imagination, while the effort of the Christians in later days to show that the Roman Government was not to blame, but would have gladly liberated Jesus, accounts

for the reported attempts of Pilate to persuade the supposed mob to let him execute justice in his own way.

Relieving the accounts of their unhistorical embellishments, we find that the priests sent Jesus to Pilate as soon after six o'clock in the morning as possible, that a few of them who had influence with him, because they could do much to restrain the people from creating a tumult and could easily discredit him with the Roman Government, went to him with the request that he put Jesus to death, explaining to him that he could justify the act to himself on the ground that Jesus, laying claim to the throne of David and having already a large following, might at any time become dangerous, or at least troublesome, to the Roman Government. This is probable history. There was no crowd present, Jesus was not sent to Herod, the demand for the release of Barabbas did not occur at the same time, and Pilate did not consult a crowd, which was not present, nor wash his hands, in token of innocence, as if he had been a Jew.

§ § *LXXXIV—LXXXVI: Mark xv, 16-32; Luke xxiii, 26-43; Matt. xxvii, 27-44*

It is related that after the condemnation of Jesus, the soldiers took him into a hall, called by Mark the Prætorium, and in Matthew's Gospel the common hall, evidently a large room which served as a guard room.

When it is said that they called together "the whole band," it is not necessary to suppose that a whole garrison of Jerusalem was meant, but only such soldiers as happened to be on guard in the palace of Herod. The garrison consisted of only six hundred men, one

cohort, and it is certainly not probable that all were summoned from the fort of Antonia, nor that there was a room in the building where Pilate held court large enough for so many. It is hardly probable that even a maniple of two hundred men was present. To a detail of such as were present Jesus was handed over for crucifixion. It is said that while the soldiers were preparing to carry out the sentence, they indulged in coarse brutality with their prisoner. The account is open to suspicion, since this is the third time that the same story has been told and because the Christians believed that the abuse had been prophesied. This time, however, there seems to be more probability of its truth, for the reasons that Jesus had been condemned as a pretender to the Jewish throne and that the soldiers who had him in charge were probably Samaritans.

The Romans had no Roman legion in Palestine, but only such provincial soldiers as they had taken over at the deposition and banishment of Archelaus in 6 A.D. As the Jews would not bear arms, except in a war for Jewish independence, the rulers of Palestine had been obliged to draw their soldiers from the non-Jewish population. Those under the Romans were known as the Cæsareans and Sebastians, the latter being Samaritans, and so it happened that Jesus fell into the hands not only of a rough soldiery, but of men full of a bitter hatred of Jews. One may well imagine that they vented their race hatred upon him and that they possibly did carry out the brutal scene of the mockery of a king. It is not necessary to press or criticise the purple robe of Mark, or the scarlet robe of Matthew, to imagine that it was really a royal garment, or to wonder where they had plundered a



royal wardrobe. It was evidently the first thing that came to hand, with some colour in it, and a makeshift, as the hastily made crown was a makeshift for a real crown. The spitting and the smiting are unnecessary features of the account based on supposed prophecy. The object of the soldiers, if the account be true, was mockery rather than personal abuse and even the crown of thorns, upon which much stress has been laid, seems to have been made with the idea of providing something that would pass for a crown and not for the purpose of causing suffering. While, however, the account, in its main features, is altogether possible, it needs to be borne in mind that there were no friendly eye-witnesses to relate to the disciples what happened.

Pictures of Jesus bearing the cross, with which art has made us familiar, are altogether misleading. Artists are seldom historians and never archæologists. Had any of them ever been interested to inquire as to the method of crucifixion practised by the Romans, and whether Oriental custom differed from the Roman, they would have learned that there were so many modes of crucifixion that no one could say definitely just how it was carried out in a given case; but it certainly did not occur as they imagined; for there were no crosses constructed of two pieces of heavy timber crossed and fastened together, either kept on hand ready for use, or hastily constructed, to be carried by the victims to the place of execution.

A common mode of crucifixion was by means of a single heavy post to be erected in the ground and which might possibly be carried or dragged by the victim. This being set in the ground, the victim was fastened to it by a nail through his hands, extended above his head, the feet being either nailed or bound. In Rome,

however, the posts were permanent at the place of execution and a heavy cross-bar was laid upon the neck of the victim and his arms bound to it. In this way he was led through the city. Arrived at the place of execution, his hands were nailed to the cross-bar, on which he was then partly pulled and partly lifted up, until the cross-bar could be hung upon a nail or set into a socket in the post. The feet were then either tied or nailed to the post below. Never was a victim nailed to a finished cross, which was then lifted up until its base could be dropped into a hole in the ground. As executions were common enough in Jerusalem, it may be taken for granted that posts for crucifixion were permanent and that Golgotha, the place of a skull, derived its name, not, as has been supposed, because it was a hill resembling a skull, but because it was the regular place for crucifixions. If this be so, it was neither a finished cross nor the heavy post which Jesus was expected to carry, but the cross-bar, called by the Romans *patibulum*, which was also heavy, too heavy for one worn as he was by the nervous strain and the recent scourging. On this account the centurion compelled Simon, a man from Cyrene, the capital of Libya, whom they met on his way to the city, to carry the heavy piece of timber. The account is made more realistic by the mention of the fact that this Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus, who were evidently men living at the time and were well known to the Christians in Rome, for whom this Gospel was written. The mention of the younger men was omitted in the later Gospels, for the reason that they were no longer living when these were written.

Luke alone introduces the statement that a multitude, including many women, followed to the place

of execution, which is not impossible; but when we realise that the condemnation had been brought about quickly and quietly and that the guard with their prisoner hurried out of the city, the attendance of a crowd seems quite improbable, while the twelfth chapter of the book of Zechariah seems to have suggested to the author scenes which he thought must have occurred at this time.

There was a proverb in the Jewish collection of proverbs (Prov. xxxi, 6): "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts." In accordance with this, the Babylonian Talmud contained the following provision: "When one is taken out to be executed there is (to be) given him a piece of the gum of frankincense in a cup of wine, in order to deaden his consciousness."

It is said that the ladies belonging to the upper classes in Jerusalem always provided the wine and frankincense. Mark evidently knew of the custom, but made the curious mistake of substituting myrrh for frankincense, confusing it with a custom with which he was more familiar. In Greek and Roman society the women are said to have often put myrrh into their wine, because it kept it from going to the head.

Matthew afterwards misunderstood the custom and purpose entirely and wrote, "they gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall," a passage in the 69th Psalm, "They gave me gall to eat: and when I was thirsty, they gave me vinegar to drink," which he imagined referred to Jesus, outweighing with him the Christian tradition.

Matthew states that Jesus declined the drink on account of the taste, Mark merely that "he received

it not," giving no reason. We may be sure that Jesus wanted to retain full consciousness and it is very probable that he believed even then that God would rescue him. The retention of the Latin word "Calvary" in Luke's Gospel is somewhat misleading, until one learns that "Calvary" means "skull" and was not the name of the place, but a translation of it.

It was the custom for the clothing of the victim to be divided among the executioners, but this did not happen in the case of Jesus, any more than in any other case, "that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet." Neither Mark nor Luke said that it was done in fulfilment of prophecy, as Matthew did, but they both thought it, since, in their misunderstanding, of the nature of Hebrew poetry, they show that they had in mind the 18th verse of the 22nd Psalm:

"They part my garments among them,  
And cast lots upon my vesture."

Hebrew poetry consisted in expressing the same thing twice in different ways. The early Christians, however, apparently ignored this fact, as they did concerning the ass and a colt, the foal of an ass, and, imagining that this was a prophecy to be fulfilled in the life of the Messiah, thought that this passage contained two separate statements concerning what must happen. They reported, therefore, that the garments of Jesus were divided, with the exception of one, upon which lots were cast. The writer of the fourth Gospel afterwards gave as a reason for the casting of lots, that this was a seamless garment, like the sleeveless undergarment of the High-Priest, which Philo said was a symbol of the Logos. As the ordinary clothing of a

man at that time in Palestine consisted of five pieces, a tunic, a long outer garment, a girdle, a head-covering, and sandals, the tradition became established that four soldiers were occupied with the crucifixion.

Mark states that the crucifixion took place about nine o'clock in the morning and there is no reason to doubt the statement, but it shows how much the matter was hurried by the priests; for, with the journey from the palace of the High-Priest to the court where Pilate was, then the preparation for the crucifixion and then another long journey outside the city to the place of crucifixion, there was no time left, out of three hours, for a lengthy trial. An inscription upon the cross declared that Jesus was "the King of the Jews." It was customary to put an inscription upon crosses, stating the crime for which the victim suffered. There is no reason to doubt that this inscription was on the cross of Jesus. It shows conclusively that he suffered because he was accused of being a pretender to the Jewish throne, but it shows also the utter contempt in which Pilate held the whole Jewish race and especially the priests, who, he knew perfectly well, had delivered Jesus out of spite, hatred, and fear. The inscription was in Aramaic, both because that was the language of the country and because Pilate was glad to show his contempt of Jews. Long afterwards the Christians imagined that it had been written also in Greek and Latin, as if it had been a decree of the empire recognising the royalty of Jesus, which is altogether improbable, since very few in Jerusalem knew anything of Latin, and the crucifixion would not concern those who spoke Greek only, nor did Pilate intend to honour Jesus, but to hurt the Jews, by showing them a Jewish king crucified.

Luke alone states that Jesus prayed for his executioners in the words: "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do." The words are lacking in three of the best manuscripts and yet they are quoted by Irenæus and Origin, in the Acts of Pilate and in the Clementine Homilies. Opinions are, therefore, divided as to their genuineness. Luke assigns, virtually, the same words to Stephen and, as regards Jesus, it is necessary to bear in mind that there was no one in sympathy with his friends to tell them afterwards whether he said anything or not. Mark states that the women, who were present, were a long way off. This fact needs to be borne in mind also as regards the account of the "reviling." It could hardly have proceeded from the common people, if there were many of them present, because Jesus had made a profound impression upon them, both by his wonderful personality and by his talks in the temple. Even if they were not in entire sympathy with him, they were in no mood to revile him, while, as to the priests, they had accomplished their purpose and it was their policy to keep out of the way. They were also too busy with preparations for the Passover to leave the city. We may conclude that the 22nd Psalm supplied the material for the account of the "reviling." It is, however, altogether probable that Jewish Christians, in their later missionary work, came upon the objection that Jesus could not have been the Messiah as his friends believed, or he would have saved himself, while it is not impossible that this conclusion may have found utterance at the time of the crucifixion.

There was an early Christian tradition that two others were crucified at the same time as Jesus. Mark calls them thieves and Matthew follows him, while

Luke calls them malefactors. There would be no reason to doubt the tradition, except that Mark says that the Scripture was fulfilled thereby, "and he was numbered with the transgressors." This was from the unknown prophet of the exile, whose delineation (Is. liii) of the suffering Servant of Jahveh proved such a valuable quarry to the Jewish Christians of materials for illustrating the life of Jesus.

Among the many things for which we have to thank the patient labour of a multitude of honest and faithful men is the fact that we have acquired a more intelligent understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures than was possible to Jews nineteen centuries ago, and with it a growing historical consciousness, which is virtually a new sense, transforming the records of the past from a merely flat surface to the proportions of a true perspective.

Another cause for gratitude is the new revelation that everything that happens is the result of its antecedents and not because of a plan fixed and ordered centuries before, which forces us to the conclusion that no prediction of events is possible. For these causes, which control our present mode of thinking, we may accept the tradition that two others were crucified at the same time as Jesus, but not that it happened in fulfilment of prophecy. Mark, having told of the "reviling," took it for granted that the two "thieves" joined in it and Matthew copied his statement. The author of the third Gospel, however, who was a man of much literary ability, seldom let an opportunity pass for embellishing his narrative for literary effect. He saw his opportunity here for drawing an impressive picture of the contrast between a hardened and a repentant sinner, and between a man suffering the

agony of crucifixion and his immediate prospect of sharing the delights of all orthodox Jews at the table of the Patriarchs in Paradise. The conversation is entirely a work of the imagination, with no historical foundation. The author of the fourth Gospel afterwards omitted the earlier accounts both of the "reviling" and the conversation.

§ LXXXVII: *Mark xv, 33-39; Luke xxiii, 44-48;*  
*Matt. xxvii, 45-54*

Mark states that there was darkness over the whole land from noon until three o'clock. Matthew follows him exactly, while Luke says that the darkness extended over all the earth and explains that it was caused by an eclipse of the sun. Luke probably did not know what caused an eclipse, nor that it could not affect even what he thought constituted the whole earth, but the fact is that the Passover occurred at the time of the full moon, when an eclipse was impossible. The day may have been cloudy and that fact may have left an impression upon the minds of the women who were present, when they related their experiences to their friends, but there is good reason to suppose that a prophecy which the Christians discovered had much to do with the reported darkness. About eight hundred years before, the prophet Amos had denounced the crimes and oppressions of the upper classes in the kingdom of Israel and had threatened the vengeance of Jahveh. He told them that Jahveh had said (viii, 9) that, when he came to judgment, "It will come to pass in that day, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." It undoubtedly seemed to the Christians that this threat



of Amos against the kingdom of Israel eight hundred years before was a "Messianic" prophecy and, therefore, must have been fulfilled at the time of the crucifixion.

But, aside from this supposed Scriptural authority for the darkness, Mark, with whom the account originated, is supposed to have written his Gospel in Rome, where it was popularly believed that at the murder of Julius Cæsar an eclipse of the sun took place, lasting from the sixth hour until night. This belief attained classic record in the first *Georgic* of Virgil, beginning with the 462nd line. The enthusiastic evangelist must have argued that, if nature put on mourning at the death of Cæsar, how much more must this have been the case at the death of the great Son of God. There was, therefore, both Hebrew prophecy and pagan precedent for asserting the darkness. We have seen that an eclipse was impossible in Judæa at the time of the crucifixion. There was also none at the death of Cæsar, for he was murdered in the year 44 B.C. and there was no eclipse visible at Rome from January 4, 48, to July 31, 40, while three eclipses, took place in the years 36, 35, and 31, during which years Virgil was writing the *Georgics*. Virgil, therefore, may have recorded, or he may have caused, the legend which was popular at Rome, while, both in the case of Cæsar and of Jesus, it seemed but natural to those who adored and loved them that nature should put on mourning at their death.

Mark says that at three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Elói, Elói, lamà sabachtháni?" and that some of them that stood by understood that he was calling for Elias. Although the expression, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is from the 22nd Psalm and it has been objected that one in such

dire distress would not express his agony through a quotation, yet it would seem the rather that one nourished upon the Psalms from childhood would naturally make use of the familiar words, and this tradition would seem to be historically true, both on account of the reported misunderstanding of the words and because it shows the final heartbreak of despair on the part of Jesus, a fact which could never have been invented and which was so entirely contrary to the Christian beliefs concerning him that it was afterwards suppressed in the third and fourth Gospels.

While there were no friends of Jesus present, the words and the misunderstanding of them could very well have been reported afterwards by "some of them that stood by." As regards the misunderstanding, Jesus spoke Aramaic, as did most of those present, but, being already weak and faint, he either said *Elôî* so feebly that they misunderstood him, to say *Elî*, or they pretended to do so, for they might easily have known from the rest of the sentence that he was calling upon God and not upon Elias. Either understanding him, or pretending to understand him, to call upon Elias, some one may have said, "Let us see whether Elias will come to take him down." This is probably historical, while the added account of the sponge with vinegar is probably borrowed from the 22nd Psalm—"They gave me vinegar to drink."

That this statement that Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" formed part of the earliest tradition and that the circumstances under which it is narrated make it seem to be a true record, shows that, up to the last moment of his life, he expected divine deliverance, which would give him the victory by establishing the Kingdom of God,

and this makes it evident both that he had not expected to die and that he had never told the disciples that he was going to Jerusalem in order to die.

“And Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost.” Those who were crucified sometimes lived for several days in great suffering. Jesus died at the end of six hours and literally of a broken heart. The complete shattering of the most glorious ideal that ever illuminated a human heart resulted in a mental agony which far eclipsed all physical pain and, when the last ray of hope faded away, there came a sudden clot upon the brain and the greatest life that was ever lived was gone into the great eternity. Luke suppressed the utterance of despair and substituted a statement that Jesus said, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,” because it was contrary to his interpretation of Jesus, whose suffering and death he believed to be a divinely-imposed necessity, to think that he should have uttered a cry of despair at the conclusion of the willingly accepted sacrifice of his life.

He therefore substituted a convenient quotation from the 31st Psalm in place of the words attested by tradition, and this necessitated the further change to the statement that it was the soldiers who mocked Jesus and offered him vinegar. Matthew adhered to the older tradition, which so far as the words are concerned has strong historical probability.

Mark states that “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” Luke makes no mention of it, but Matthew copies the narrative of Mark.

It is perfectly evident that such a story is but the materialisation of theological ideas which had come into vogue.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews had written of Christians "entering into that which is within the veil; whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (vi, 20), and that "Christ being come a High Priest of the good things to come . . . entered in once for all into the holy place" (ix, 11, 12), and then of "a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." (x, 20). It was perfectly natural that the people, not at all impressed by the imagined symbolism, should have taken this figurative language literally, and that consequently it had come to be reported and believed that, at the death of Jesus, the great veil which separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place in the temple at Jerusalem, had been torn from top to bottom by invisible and supernatural agency.

Matthew adds certain embellishments to the traditional narrative. There was an earthquake powerful enough to rend the rocks, the graves were opened, many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves (after his resurrection) and went into the holy city and appeared unto many. The words "after his resurrection" represent a correction of the legend, either by the author or a later editor, to harmonise with the Pauline theory that Jesus was the "first-fruits" rescued from death.

As in the case of the darkness, Matthew found abundant material for the things, which he described from both Jewish and pagan sources. In the Book of Amos (viii, 8) he would read, "Shall not the land tremble for this and every one mourn that dwelleth therein?" and in the Book of Isaiah (xxiv, 18-20): "The windows from on high are open and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken

down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth will reel to and fro like a drunkard and will be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof will be heavy upon it; and it will fall and not rise again."

As, however, this would supply nothing but the earthquake and, as the first Gospel was written in Rome, in all probability early in the second century, it is probable that Virgil's accounts of the portents which accompanied the death of Cæsar, (*Georgics*, I. vv, 463 ff.), together with descriptions in the seventh book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, supplied the material for these legends; for they relate, in addition to the darkness, an eruption of Ætna, an earthquake in the Alps, the rending of the rocks, the waking of the dead, and the mysterious coming and going of pale forms in the darkness.

Mark states that the centurion, being impressed by the outcry and the sudden death of Jesus, declared, "Truly this man was a Son of God." Matthew afterwards thought that it was the earthquake which brought not only the centurion but all the soldiers to a like conclusion through fear, while Luke thought that the centurion, impressed by the gentle spirit of Jesus, glorified God, declaring, "Certainly this was a righteous man," and then that all present smote upon their breasts and returned to the city under the consciousness of having committed a great crime.

That these statements are the result of underlying motives is easily seen. With Mark, writing for pagans, it was impressive to record that the conversion of the pagan world began at once upon the death of Jesus. Matthew made his statement still stronger, while Luke seemed to realise that the officer, if he were a

Roman, was not a monotheist and therefore could not have spoken of a Son of God, while, if he were a Samaritan, he would not have used a title which was applied to a Jewish Messiah. He therefore changed the supposed theological conclusion into a moral one, and added a feature intended to throw the blame for the death of Jesus upon the priests and not the Jewish people.

Summing up our study of the accounts of the crucifixion, we have found, as the most probable facts of history, that Jesus was taken after midnight on Thursday by a company of slaves sent out by the High Priest, with Judas as guide, and brought to the palace of the High Priest; that all the disciples fled, except Peter, who followed to the palace, but also fled when danger seemed to threaten him as well; that a few who were in the plot were notified and came to the palace, but that the Sanhedrim was not summoned and that there was no trial before it, both because there was no time for a legal trial and because a verdict by the Sanhedrim could not have been executed; that haste and secrecy were absolutely necessary; that, as early as possible in the morning, Jesus was sent to Pilate and that a few of the priests who had influence with him requested a sentence of execution, explaining to him that he might easily grant it on the ground that Jesus was a pretender to the Jewish throne and might become dangerous; that Pilate granted their request; that there was no crowd present and that Jesus was not sent to Herod Antipas; that the crucifixion took place about nine o'clock in the morning and that Jesus died about three in the afternoon; that Simon of Cyrene carried the cross-bar, and that, just before his death, Jesus uttered the cry of despair, "My God, my

God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and that all other details given in the three accounts are unhistorical.

§ *LXXXVIII: Mark xv, 40, 41; Luke xxiii, 49; Matt. xxvii, 55, 56*

Among the best friends of Jesus there had been many women, some of whom undoubtedly followed him to Jerusalem, while others may have joined them by the way. These apparently witnessed the crucifixion from a distance, near enough to see what was done, but not near enough to hear what was said. Mark had learned from tradition the names of three of them and Matthew gives the same names, provided that Salome was the mother of Zebedee's children.

Luke, under the phrase "all his acquaintance," would imply that the disciples were also present. He altered the original tradition that the disciples had fled to Galilee, because it disagreed with his theory that they remained in Jerusalem and were there on Easter morning.

§ *LXXXIX: Mark xv, 42-47; Luke xxiii, 50-56; Matt. xxvii, 57-61*

There was a tradition among the early Christians that, after the death of Jesus, a stranger, presumably in Jerusalem for the Passover, begged his body of Pilate and, wrapping it in linen, deposited it in a rock-cut tomb, of which there were many in the neighbourhood, closing the entrance with a large stone. The Christians were afterwards sure that the man's name was Joseph and that he came from Ramathaim, a town about eight miles north of Jerusalem. The

tradition may be founded on fact, although the Christians discovered a prophecy (Is. lxii, 9) which they imagined referred to Jesus, "And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death," from which they may have developed the account of the two thieves, who were said to have been crucified at the same time, and of Joseph, who was said to have provided for the burial; but, if the account be true, the man naturally returned to his home and was not known afterwards among the Christians in Jerusalem, who, however, were not content with the knowledge of the bare fact, but gradually added to it certain embellishments from their imagination, which, in time, found their way into the written narrative. They assumed that he was a rich man, because he could buy a tomb, and that he was a member of the Sanhedrim, because he had influence with Pilate. Mark had already said that Jesus was condemned by the whole Sanhedrim, which would make it appear that Joseph had voted for the death of Jesus through fear of the rest and then had begged his body for burial, out of pity or sympathy. Luke saw the apparent inconsistency and stated that Joseph had not voted for the death of Jesus, a fact which he could not have known. Both Mark and Luke supposed that there had been a trial, but neither apparently knew, nor did Matthew, that a criminal trial was held before twenty-three judges and not before the whole Sanhedrim.

The earliest tradition, represented by Mark, stated that Joseph laid the body in a rock-hewn tomb. Luke added the embellishment that the tomb had never been occupied before, while, with Matthew, it had become a new tomb, which Joseph had made for himself. The embellishments are due to the love of the



Christians for Jesus and the growth of theories concerning his wonderful personality.

Joseph, if the account be true, did a merciful and honourable thing in providing a place of burial for the body of Jesus, and it is quite probable that Pilate yielded to the prejudices of the Jews by not leaving the body on the cross during the Passover. The Synoptic Gospels do not say what happened with the bodies of the two thieves, who probably had not died. The tradition that their death was hastened was of much later origin. According to the Roman custom since the time of Augustus, the bodies of Roman citizens who were executed might be delivered to their friends, while the bodies of those who were crucified were left upon the crosses until the birds of prey had consumed everything but the bones.

If concessions were made to the Jews, as is possible, it was to avoid a tumult.

In this section both Mark and Luke state definitely that the crucifixion took place on Friday, "the day before the Sabbath," the "day that was the preparation," and herein they correct their previous error, for, under the influence of Pauline ideas, they had assumed that Jesus ate on the Passover with his disciples, which could have happened only on Friday night. This would have brought the crucifixion on Saturday, which would have been impossible, because the priests, notwithstanding their haste to be rid of Jesus, would never have arranged for a crucifixion either upon the Sabbath or upon the great day of the Passover. It must stand, as a fact of history, that the crucifixion took place on Friday.

Mark says that "Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Jesus, beheld where he was laid." Matthew

makes virtually the same statement, while Luke says that all the women "beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid," but adds that "they returned and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment."

§ XC: *Mark xvi, 1-8; Luke xxiv, 1-11; Matt. xxviii 1-10*

Spices were for the purpose of embalming the body, but one does not embalm bodies which are expected to come to life again, and that this act of the women constituted part of the belief among the Christians at the very end of the first century shows that there had been no early tradition that Jesus had expected or predicted a resurrection.

Hence we must conclude that all passages in the Gospels which represent him as predicting either his death or his resurrection are unhistorical and are simply a part of early Christian apologetics.

In trying to win converts among their fellow countrymen to the belief that he was the Messiah, they found it necessary to account for his ignominious death and, believing as they did that he then occupied a throne in heaven, they readily explained his death as the means of his entrance into glory, and soon persuaded themselves that he had predicted both his death and resurrection. The result was a fixed belief in his speedy return to avenge himself upon his enemies and to establish his Kingdom, which, in the minds of the Christians, had taken the place of God's Kingdom, the coming of which he had proclaimed.

Thus ends the story of Jesus. What follows relates to the awakening of a wonderful belief and the beginning of a new religion for the world. The sweetest

dream that was ever dreamed for the joy and glory of humanity was temporarily dissipated, the grandest ideal ever presented to the heart of man was temporarily shattered, the greatest, noblest, sweetest life that ever illuminated the pathway of mankind was crushed out, not because God would have it so, nor because He demanded a sacrifice, but because priests and theologians expected thus to save their power and income. Had they been permanently successful, a well developed philosophy of despair would have become the normal heritage of the human race, but, in their haste to protect themselves, they overlooked two important factors: the capacity of the human race in the long run, for the things that are true and beautiful and good, and the power of the things that are true and beautiful and good, in the long run, to defend and establish themselves. The subsequent history of humanity has shown that these ideals of the head and heart of mankind are in the nature of divine forces, whose growth may be delayed by human ignorance and passion, but whose victory is sure. A faith like that of Jesus, which became to him the living consciousness of being personally related to the infinite life, a son, an agent, and an heir of God, and which made him seek to win all men to a like realisation of the meaning of life, was a spiritual germ of such tremendous import and power, that, once planted in the human soil, it was bound to grow, until all men everywhere should acquire its courage, its inspiration, and its hope.

In its growing through the ages it would show frequent readjustments, as it emerged from the successive and temporary forms under which men tried to realise the ideal, urging the race ever forward and upwards, until it should become to every man

what it had been in the soul of Jesus, a divine fire of love, courage, and enthusiasm.

A spiritual force working in the heart of humanity is obliged to find material form and concrete expression from such elements as a given race, age, or civilisation supplies. New conditions of life make it necessary that these external forms shall be outgrown and give way to new ones, but, as the multitude never sees beyond the surface of things, but always mistakes the form for the substance, every age of progress sees in some way or other a repetition of the crime and blunder by which the priests and theologians of Judaism tried to stifle the faith of Jesus. In the end, emancipation is accomplished, truth wins the victory, and religion, which men thought was threatened, becomes a stronger, sweeter power than before. Thus the whole history of Christianity is but the record of how the leaven of the faith of Jesus has worked in the Christian part of the world during nineteen centuries, expressing itself in materials taken from Jewish, Asiatic, Greek, Roman, German, and other pagan sources, struggling mightily from time to time to emancipate itself from all that is material, temporary, and local, and to assert itself simply as the great consciousness of God in the soul of man.

Our purpose here is to show only the beginning of this process, by which the leaven of a great faith has been slowly transforming humanity, and to discover how the love of a few men for Jesus proved stronger than the crushing of their hopes and became a faith, which is slowly but surely conquering the world.

#### THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION

It must be recognised as a fact of history, notwith-

standing the theory of Luke, that, at the time of the arrest of Jesus, all the disciples forsook him and fled, with the exception of Peter, who also fled within three hours, and that they all returned to Galilee, disillusioned disappointed, broken-hearted men. At some time thereafter, how soon cannot be known, we find these same men back in Jerusalem preaching publicly and boldly that the Jesus who had been crucified was really the Messiah, that he had retired to a throne in heaven, but would soon return to punish his enemies and to establish *his* Kingdom.

This is the most extraordinary fact in history and demands a satisfactory explanation, which, unfortunately, we do not find in the Gospels; for the accounts of a physical resurrection, which they contain, are late, fragmentary, legendary, and contradictory, so that no intelligible statement can be formed from them. We have but one other account, which, fortunately, is from an earlier date, contains no improbable statements, and seems to represent the actual facts of experience, as they were known to the first generation of Jewish Christians. This is the statement by Paul in the 15th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, written in or about the year 57 A. D. He says that he delivered what he had received, presumably from Peter at the time of his first visit to Jerusalem. What he had received was that Jesus, whom he calls Messiah, died for our sins according to the Scriptures. It was the fixed belief among the early Jewish Christians that the death of Jesus had been prophesied in their Scriptures. That it had to do with "our sins" was a Pauline idea, for the earlier belief had been that the death was an act of obedience and the condition of entrance into glory. He also received the belief and

attestation of the fact that the body of Jesus was buried, thus recognising the death as real and not merely a syncope, as was afterwards sometimes assumed. Further he received the statement and belief that "he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." Having recorded these beliefs, which he found held by the Christians in Jerusalem, he gives in order the accounts of the various appearances of Jesus as they were related to him, adding his own experience as the last. According to his statement, there were six occasions on which Jesus "appeared": first to Peter, secondly to the twelve, thirdly to about five hundred, fourthly to James, fifthly to all the apostles. This is what Paul declares that he "received," and he adds that there was one more appearance, which he experienced, "as unto one born out of due time."

When we examine these statements seriously, we cannot escape the conclusion that Paul was positively sure that his experience was identical with the previous ones, which had been reported to him; for he was not giving a tradition at second hand, but had had abundant opportunity to compare his experience with those of Peter and James and John and, no doubt, with those of some of the five hundred, the majority of whom were still living when he wrote. What those experiences were we are not told. He says simply that Jesus appeared, nor may we take as actual data of history the three accounts which Luke gives in the Book of the Acts of Paul's conversion, since they have undoubtedly suffered from embellishments by him. We find, however, in this same First Epistle to the Corinthians, which is an authentic writing of Paul, the statement of certain positive beliefs which are unmistakably con-

clusions drawn from the experience which accomplished his conversion.

He says: "But some will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened, except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that will be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind; but God giveth it a body, even as it pleased him, and to each seed a *body of its own*. ("His own body" is a mistranslation corrected in the new version.) There are celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial."—"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."—"As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."—"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." Such extraordinary and positive statements of belief could have come only from one who had passed through a wonderful experience, and we are able to draw direct conclusions from them as to the nature of Paul's vision. What he saw made him sure that Jesus was alive, but alive in a glorified, celestial, spiritual body, not in the original body of flesh and blood, which he was sure could not inherit the Kingdom of God. The "Kingdom of God" with him had become a heavenly life, not as with Jesus the reign of God in this world. The body which had died was no longer considered. God has replaced it with a heavenly body. Such was the belief of Paul concerning Jesus, and such was his anticipation concerning all who acquired the spirit of Jesus; for the resurrection had come to mean to him not the restoration of the body of flesh and blood, adapted to the conditions of life in this world, but the substitution for it of a much more glorious body adapted to the conditions of life

in a heavenly world, and this belief was the result of a vision which penetrated, illuminated, and transformed his whole spiritual being, and to which he referred afterwards as the revelation of Christ in *him*. A vision is the result of a subjective experience, not of an objective reality. It may be none the less true, as the outgrowth of a sudden and overwhelming conviction from forces long working in the mind, a great spiritual fact impressed upon the soul by direct intuition, but taking shape and substance from the material furnished by current ideas. There would, therefore, be two elements to such a vision, the substance and the form, the fact and its drapery, the former a permanent reality, the other local colouring. The fact in the case of these visions was the absolute conviction that Jesus was alive; the drapery came from the popular Jewish belief that God dwelt in the eternal and infinite light and that a heavenly being, especially a heavenly Messiah, would have a body of ineffable whiteness, radiance, and glory. Such must have been the nature of the vision which Paul had, an overwhelming conviction that Jesus was alive taking apparently objective form in a body of radiant light.

The others, whose experiences Paul was sure were identical with his own, certainly held the same belief and realised it under a similar form and drapery, the only difference being that with Paul it was the result of an intellectual process, with the others a transcendent miracle of love. The statement which he makes would seem to be perfectly valid historical evidence that many people, on at least six different occasions, and during a period of three years, had visions of Jesus in a glorified body, which became the foundation for the belief that he was the heavenly Messiah who would soon



return with power and glory to judge the world and to establish his kingdom. As a result of these experiences, the men who had fled in distress and fear went out with boldness and proclaimed a great belief, which, aided by the transforming influence of Paul, became a new religion for the world. Paul does not intimate in any of his epistles that he held any different belief concerning the resurrection of Jesus from any of the others, but, as he never made any reference to the restoration of his physical body, we must conclude that the resurrection meant to them what it meant to him, the survival of the personal life in a glorified and heavenly body. He declared that he did not care to know Jesus "after the flesh," for to him he was "the first-born among many brethren," who had "put on immortality," and for whom death had been "swallowed up in life." It certainly was a like conviction which gave the original apostles courage and enthusiasm. The Jesus whom they had known and loved had been elevated, as they believed, to a celestial throne and they did not think of him as sad and worn with anxiety and pain and disfigured by the cruelty of his death, but as triumphant and radiant in heaven.

To Peter first this vision came—Peter, who had loved Jesus with the intensity of a great devotion, who had been sure that he must be the Messiah who would restore the throne and kingdom of David, and yet who had denied and forsaken his Master. To Peter, suffering an agony of remorse and grief, thinking of Jesus by day and by night, living over the familiar scenes, hearing again the inspiring words, recalling the wonderful personality, there came one day the sudden triumph of faith born from the depths of unconquerable love and he saw Jesus in the dazzling

radiance of heavenly glory. He did not analyse the vision, nor discuss its subjectivity, nor trace the operation of the forces which gave it birth. For him Jesus was alive, the Messiah after all, judge and ruler of the souls of men. He ran to impart the resurrection of his faith. Then others saw and believed and a great religion with a new hope and joy for all mankind was born.

Such was the transcendent belief which sent these men out with overwhelming enthusiasm, courage, and joy to preach to the Jewish people that the same Jesus who had lived and died was really the Messiah, for they had seen him on a throne in heavenly glory. Never for an instant did it seem to them that they had seen the physical body of Jesus restored to life, for the resurrection certainly meant to them what it afterwards meant to Paul, the continuity of personal existence in a spiritual and glorified body. It was this original belief in a spiritual body which afterwards held so prominent a place in the various Gnostic systems and it may have had its origin in the Greek Mysteries.

When, however, we examine the Gospel narratives, we find nothing of the original facts, nothing of the original faith or preaching, nothing corresponding to Paul's statement as to what he had received directly from the founders of the Christian belief.

There is only a hint, as the relic of an earlier and true tradition, that the earliest appearances had been seen in Galilee and there is the story of the transfiguration, which is probably a tradition of one of the spiritual experiences, but which is put back to a period before the death of Jesus, while the tradition of its proper place is preserved in the statement that the

disciples did not mention their experience until after the resurrection.

Aside from these two relics from an earlier generation, the Gospel narratives reflect and record the effort of a later generation to explain to themselves and others, mostly foreigners, a faith which far transcended their experience and for which they had not the spiritual capacity. The resurrection had ceased to be a spiritual fact, and faith had come to mean a belief in the restoration to life of the physical body of Jesus. Questions were asked, objections were raised, tangible evidence was demanded, and this process by which a spiritual faith became materialised is recorded in the Gospels, the various narratives of which it is now necessary to analyse.

§ XC: *Mark xvi, 1-8; Luke xxiv, 1-11; Matt. xxviii, 1-10*

While the belief in a spiritual body, material indeed and very real, was the inspiring new belief in the first Christian generation, there was at the same time a wide-spread popular belief, at least among Persians and Jews, that the dead were only asleep and might at any time be awakened and resume the former life in the original body, nor had a generation passed away before the popular belief had suppressed the spiritual faith as concerned the resurrection of Jesus and men had begun to argue that, if Jesus were seen alive after his death, it must have been in his original body. The question, therefore, naturally arose as to how the original body escaped from the tomb. In answer to this question a legend began to grow that certain women had found the tomb vacant on the Sunday morning after the crucifixion. The tradition was too well established that the disciples had fled

to Galilee for them to serve at first as the supposed witnesses of a vacant tomb, but tradition had reported that some of the women from Galilee had remained in Jerusalem and witnessed the crucifixion. They were, therefore, the only available witnesses for a vacant tomb. Mark gives the earliest form of the legend of a physical resurrection, which discovered a motive for the women's remaining in Jerusalem in their intention to embalm the body of Jesus on Sunday morning. This contradicts his previous statements that Jesus had predicted his resurrection to all his friends, for the women would not have made arrangements to embalm a body which they expected would return to life. The tradition says that on the way to the tomb the women wondered who would roll away the stone, for it was very great, but that, on arriving at the tomb, they found it already rolled away. Entering in they saw a young man wearing a priestly vestment sitting on the right side and they were afraid. He said to them: "Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified; he is risen: he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there you will see him, as he said unto you."

The reference to Peter and to Galilee is a survival from the earlier and true tradition that Peter was the first to have a vision and that he was in Galilee at the time. But already the earlier faith had started on the way of its transformation to a materialistic belief. The first step lay in the thought that the heavenly body must be the original physical body transfigured, "swallowed up of life," clothed upon with the "habitation from heaven."

This interpretation of the belief necessitated the disappearance of the physical body and this is all that the earliest narrative in the Gospel relates. The women found the tomb vacant. The body of Jesus had disappeared. This was what was believed among the Christians about the year 70 A.D. There was no account of any appearances of Jesus in Jerusalem or its neighbourhood. It is not even stated that the women, who had been charged by the "young man" to tell his disciples and Peter that they would see Jesus in Galilee, did as they were told, but that they fled in fear and said nothing to anyone.

Here Mark's Gospel comes to a sudden and abrupt termination. Something that followed was apparently suppressed, because it did not agree with later beliefs and traditions, and its place supplied by extracts from the later Gospels. It is more than probable that the part suppressed related to the experiences of Peter and others in Galilee and the probability is strengthened by the fragment of the Gospel according to Peter discovered in the year 1892.

For we read: "Now, after the close of the feast of unleavened bread, as all the guests entered upon their homeward journey, they also all returned, saddened by what had happened, to their Galilean homes. But I, Simon Peter, and my brother Andrew took our nets and went to the lake, and there was with us Levi, the son of Alphæus, whom the Lord—" Here, unfortunately, the fragment comes to an end, but it would seem as if immediately thereafter there must have followed an account of the first of those remarkable experiences which convinced those who had them that Jesus was alive.

Here, then, the tradition rested for a while, but not

for long. Jesus was alive and had become the heavenly Messiah. His human body had been changed into a glorious body. Therefore, there was a vacant tomb. But neither a spiritual fact, nor the supposed objectivity of a spiritual vision, could long resist the materialistic tendencies of undeveloped minds, nor the activities of the unrestrained imagination, nor the objections and questionings of critics.

Luke, in the first eleven verses of the twenty-fourth chapter of his Gospel, shows that he was entirely familiar with the early tradition, but he already begins to transform it in the interest of his theory that all the appearances occurred in Jerusalem and not in Galilee. He suppresses the supposed commission to the women to tell the disciples to go to Galilee in order to see Jesus and merely mentions Galilee as the place where Jesus had foretold his resurrection. Matthew changed the earlier tradition still more. With him, the women do not go out to embalm the body, but simply "to see the sepulchre." They do not wonder who will roll away the stone, but there is a great earthquake, an angel descends from heaven, rolls away the stone, and sits upon it. If the angel were able to roll away the stone, one does not see the need of the earthquake. Matthew abides by the earlier tradition that the visions to the disciples took place in Galilee and yet adopts Luke's theory that the disciples were still in Jerusalem.

The women, who in the tradition of Mark's time had said nothing to anyone concerning what they had seen and heard, now ran with great joy to bring the disciples' word. Finally, according to Matthew, Jesus himself appears to the women, not at all as a vision and not in heavenly glory, but in his original

body of flesh and blood and, that there may be no doubt about it, the women hold him by the feet. The belief has become entirely materialised, since Mark wrote, probably fifty years before, for to the empty tomb has been added the appearance of the physical body of Jesus. It was inevitable that the belief should become more and more material, ever since it began to depart from the overwhelming impression of the spiritual visions which gave the founders of Christianity their faith and courage.

The story of the vacant tomb represented the first yielding in the interest of materialism. In the first glow of enthusiasm and joy, which sent men out to tell the story of a heavenly and glorified Jesus, no one had thought of his human body, yet, before a generation had passed away, the thought became inevitable that a body, which had been "transformed," "transfigured," "clothed upon," "swallowed up of life," required the disappearance of the physical body. By the time that this demand made itself seriously felt there was no one to tell where the body of Jesus had been entombed. It was known that the disciples had fled, but a tradition related that some women from Galilee had witnessed the crucifixion from a distance. When, therefore, the demand to know what had become of the body of Jesus made itself felt, it became a simple matter for these women to do duty in tradition as witnesses that the tomb of Jesus had been found vacant by them. This effort of the early Christians to furnish evidence of a physical resurrection, in place of the earlier spiritual belief, became the source of much mischief; for it was the entering wedge by means of which a materialised belief eventually took the place of a great faith and force in the spiritual consciousness. It is no more a fact of history than any

of the later legends which were built upon it. Matthew's Gospel shows that, before his time, the Jewish opponents to the belief of the Christians had answered the story of the vacant tomb by saying that if the tomb were vacant, it was because the disciples had stolen the body. The Christians had to meet this objection and there grew up the story of the watch.

They said that the priests and Pharisees had heard that Jesus had predicted his resurrection on the third day and that to prevent such an occurrence they had requested and obtained a military guard from Pilate.

This Matthew had already related in the previous chapter which was omitted from the consecutive narrative, because the earlier writers had not heard of any such provision. The story is absolutely impossible; for, in the first place, Jesus had never said anything about an expected resurrection and, had he done so, the priests would have paid no attention to such a prediction, since they denied absolutely the possibility of resurrection. The priests, too, were in no mood to ask any further favours of Pilate, since they were smarting under the insult put upon them by him in the inscription on the cross.

The whole story is simply a refuge for parrying the Jewish accusation that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus, and neither the story of the guard nor the accusation of theft had been heard of by Paul, nor Mark, nor by anyone until after the close of the first century.

Nor until about the same time did anyone imagine or report any appearances of Jesus in and about Jerusalem, for it was a difficult matter to alter the early and true traditions that the visions were seen in Galilee. It was the growing necessity for evidence



of a physical resurrection which gradually transformed the early belief and tradition. The earliest tradition did not relate that the appearances of Jesus occurred at the same time as his resurrection, but at intervals during several years, and the first one, to Peter, at least two weeks after the death of Jesus, for the journey on foot to Galilee would take that long; nevertheless, the belief was very early established that the resurrection had taken place on the third day, and this seemed so important a matter that it is stated three times in the Gospels that Jesus had predicted his resurrection on "the third day," while Paul says that he was raised on the third day, "according to the Scriptures." The early belief among the Jewish Christians was that God had brought him back from Hades and elevated him to a throne in heaven. As this was believed to be the purpose of God, it was concluded that he would execute his will as soon as possible after the death of Jesus. As the body was laid in the tomb on Friday afternoon and as the Sabbath began at six o'clock and, as God could not work on the Sabbath, it seemed inevitable that the resurrection must have taken place very soon after the Sabbath was over—that is, soon after six o'clock on Saturday afternoon, when Sunday had already begun.

It is said that the women came to the sepulchre very early on Sunday morning, but not that they saw the resurrection, only the evidences that it had already taken place. It was not long before the Christians thought that they found the resurrection on the third day foretold in the Scriptures. A passage in the prophecy of Hosea was especially welcome (Hosea vi, 1, 2): "Come and let us return unto Jahveh: for he hath torn and he will heal us: he hath smitten and

he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us: in the third day he will raise us up and we shall live in his sight." This referred to a reformation of Israel which Hosea hoped for eight hundred years before, but it mattered not. The reference to "the third day" made it a "Messianic" prophecy and it passed into Christian belief that Jesus was raised the third day "according to the Scriptures."

It would be interesting to inquire how much a similar belief in other religions with which the Jews were familiar influenced this feature of the early Christian belief. There were thousands of Jews living in Egypt, where for thousands of years the whole population had believed in the death and resurrection of Osiris. He was believed to have risen on the third day and his resurrection was celebrated annually on the 25th of March. In Syria it was Adonis, who was the young god killed on Mt. Lebanon and raised again the third day. The universal lamentation for his death gave place to rejoicing on the 25th of March, and that the Jews were not unfamiliar with the belief and custom is testified to by Ezekiel, who states that in his day the mourning for Adonis was actually held in the temple at Jerusalem. A little farther away, in Phrygia, it was Attis, whose resurrection on the third day was annually celebrated on the 25th of March. Among the Greeks the same beliefs and customs clustered around the names of Bacchus, Hercules, and Æsculapius, while in Tarsus, where Paul was born and brought up, it was Mithras, who died and rose again and whose resurrection was celebrated on the 25th of March. From this overwhelming evidence of belief and custom over a large part of the ancient world, it would seem that the Christian belief early became not only material-

ised, but actually paganised in its adaptation to pagan ideas. It is the province of historical criticism to deliver it from its encumbrance of Jewish and pagan conceptions, making it a power in the spiritual life and not defending in its name the myths, legends, and traditions which have come down from the cruder ages of mankind.

The story of a god, who died and rose again on the third day, common to so many ancient religions, had its origin uncounted centuries ago in the recognised fact that, after a long period of the waning energies of the sun, there were three days in the month of December which were of equal length and then, on the 25th, the new Sun God was born. Three months later, at the time of the spring equinox, all mankind rejoiced at the prospect of coming harvests and vintages, new life and joy. It seemed as if a god, who had been dead under the winter's darkness and cold, had suddenly burst the barriers of the tomb and come forth to save and bless mankind. Remembering the three days of uncertainty, which had preceded his supposed birth, it seemed fitting to keep three days of mourning for his apparent death, which should give place to joy on the bright morning of his resurrection. Such is the origin of the theory of a resurrection on the third day, no more a fact in the case of Jesus than in those of Osiris, Adonis, Attis, Bacchus, Æsculapius, Hercules, or Mithras. The immortality of the soul is a fundamental fact of the spiritual consciousness and the undoubted immortality of Jesus has nothing whatsoever to do with the vernal equinox. It was the absolute fact that he was alive and that it could not be otherwise which made itself felt with overwhelming power in the spiritual consciousness

of his disciples and became the cause of the visions which they wove about it from the material of Messianic ideas which were prominent in their minds. Their actual faith is a permanent reality, ours as much as theirs. Jesus is alive, because the soul is immortal and is unaffected by what may happen to the body. The form by which this belief was made real to the disciples was an incident of their mental equipment, and neither had it any objective reality, nor is it to us any disclosure of actual facts. For us Jesus is not the heavenly Messiah, and our belief in his immortality is dependent neither upon the visions of the early years after the crucifixion, nor upon the later traditions of a physical resurrection, but upon the fundamental fact of our consciousness that the qualities of soul which he manifested are evidences of inherent immortality.

#### LATER LEGENDS

##### *Luke xxiv, 12-53*

The change in Christian belief from spirituality to materialism, was radical and most unfortunate.

The belief that Jesus was alive and that many had seen him in a spiritual body and in heavenly glory gave way step by step to the totally different belief that his physical body had come to life again, and for this an ever-increasing amount of evidence was demanded until enough had accumulated to apparently satisfy all incredulity.

The change began with the story of the vacant tomb. Some of the women, it was said, had found it vacant. This did not long satisfy, for the evidence of women

counted for nothing among the Jews, and, as the Church developed its organisation and power, the feeling grew up that apostolic authority was the only reliable source for belief and practice. Luke supplied the demand for better evidence than that furnished by the supposed story of the women for the vacant tomb. He brings Peter upon the scene and relates that he ran to the tomb, stooped down and looked in and saw the linen cloths by themselves, and that then he departed to his home. According to the earlier tradition, Peter was already on the way to Galilee; also, according to the earlier tradition, the women were too frightened to say anything to anyone; but, according to Luke, they told the apostles, who were still in Jerusalem. Luke did violence to all the early tradition that the disciples had fled on Thursday night and that the experiences which revived their faith were had in Galilee, because it seemed to him more dignified and fitting that the new religion, which had grown to quite respectable proportions in his day, should have had its wonderful beginning in Jerusalem and not in the obscure corner of an unimportant province, and that apostolic authority for the vacant tomb was necessary.

One need not suppose that he invented all the tales which he relates. He undoubtedly found many of them in circulation and combined them often with much ingenuity, poetic insight, and literary ability. In this way one may write a very interesting book, but it is not history.

The story of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus on Sunday afternoon is an allegory of much poetic beauty, the apologetic purpose of which is perfectly evident. Jesus is said to have joined them, but,

being prevented by supernatural influence, they did not recognise him either from his appearance or from his voice. Feigning ignorance of the great events which they were discussing, he asked if it were not necessary for the Messiah to suffer as Jesus had, as the means of his entrance into glory, and then expounded to them the supposed references to the Messiah throughout all the Jewish Scriptures. This represents the belief of many Christians at the time when Luke's Gospel was written, but it did not occur to the author that, if Jesus had come to life in his physical body on the third day after his death, he would not have changed the method and content of his teaching so completely as this account assumes. He had never talked about himself, nor claimed to be the Messiah, nor referred to the Jewish Scriptures as prophetic of his life in any way. His whole enthusiasm had been expended upon the Kingdom of God and all his efforts had been directed to the preparation of the Jewish people for worthy citizenship in it.

The narrative goes on to state that the two disciples persuaded Jesus to spend the night with them and that, as they were eating, "He took the bread and blessed it and brake and gave it to them; and their eyes were opened and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight! Then they returned to Jerusalem and reported to the 'eleven' what had happened, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread."

Many years after this supposed event, the breaking of bread had become an established custom among the Christians and, by means of it, they strengthened their loyalty and reminded themselves of the solidarity of their faith, as had the eleven at the Last Supper; but this account states that, three days after the Last

Supper, two men who were not present at it were made to recognise the mysterious stranger as Jesus through the breaking of bread. It is manifestly impossible, and the legend is simply one of the efforts of the early Christians to satisfy the demand for witnesses in Jerusalem of a physical resurrection. The account proceeds to still more positive evidence. As the two were relating their experience, Jesus suddenly appeared and they were frightened, supposing that they saw a ghost. It is quite probable that the criticism was often made of the Christian belief that the resurrection of Jesus could not have been a reality, because the Christians had never seen anything but a ghost. Luke meets that criticism and settles it by relating that the apostles themselves at first thought that they saw a ghost, but that Jesus had set the matter at rest by showing them his hands and his feet and inviting them to feel of him and see for themselves that he was real flesh and blood. We are a long way from the spiritual visions of Jesus in heavenly glory, which filled the souls of the first apostles with their glowing enthusiasm and overwhelming power, and have descended from a scene of celestial exaltation and victory to the tangible demonstration of a physical resurrection. But there is more to come. Some miraculous, supernatural influence might have made the apostles think that they looked upon actual wounds and felt of real flesh and blood, but there could be no delusion about the matter of eating. To close the last possibility of questioning or doubt, Jesus asks for something to eat, and they give him some broiled fish.

Materialism has won the victory over spiritual faith and henceforth for centuries a Christian world would believe both that Jesus survived death, because

the body returned to life and resumed all physical functions, and that immortality means for us a like return to physical conditions, with all the limitations of the body restored and perpetuated. The inheritance of the unfortunate transformation of the Christian faith from a glowing spiritual consciousness to a hard and rank materialism has actually deadened the spiritual consciousness of Christendom through all the intervening centuries and made it impossible for millions of men to conceive of immortality except in terms of the physical life.

Luke has still more to relate. After Jesus had completed the evidence of his restoration to physical life by eating broiled fish, he is said to have explained to them that it had been necessary for him to carry out the rôle which had been laid out for him in the Pentateuch, the Prophecies, and the Psalms. This supposed rôle was the result of a forcible misinterpretation of the Jewish Scriptures at the hands of the Christians in order to prove their theory that he was the Messiah. They did him a grievous wrong, with great violence to historical truth, in pretending that he was responsible for so much folly, either during his life or after his death. On the contrary, he had distinctly warned them against the leaven of the Pharisees, in which all their perversions of the Scriptures had their root.

Luke goes still further. He says that Jesus told those present that repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in his name unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. The belief that Christianity was intended and destined to be a religion for all the world had become well established by the end of the first century, but it was due largely to the determination, energy, and success of Paul. Jesus had had no such



idea and had taught nothing of the sort. He believed that his mission was only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and his purpose to prepare them for the Kingdom of God, which was coming so soon that any thought of a world-wide mission was impossible. It is certain that, if the original apostles had received from Jesus any such idea, they would not have opposed so bitterly the effort of Paul to proclaim a religion free from all barriers between Gentiles and Jews.

Nor did Jesus ever preach about the "remission of sins." He begged men to forsake their sins, to change the whole tenor of their lives, and to develop the character and conduct which would fit them for citizenship in the Kingdom of God; but he had no theories and taught no doctrines about sin, atonement, salvation, or any kind of a machinery of grace. These things were part of the "leaven of the Pharisees" and, in their doctrinal form, were injected into the new religion by Paul.

As regards sin and forgiveness, his positive teaching was that forgiveness was emancipation from the power of evil habit by a new love of righteousness awakened in the heart.

Paul's ideas won the victory in time, being helped very much by the destruction of the temple, and, when once established, it seemed to the Christians that both the ideas and the command had come from Jesus. In the supposed command to the apostles to tarry in Jerusalem until they received power from on high, Luke cuts away the ground entirely from the only real history which had to do, at least primarily, with visions of Jesus in Galilee.

In the two traditions, which Luke has combined, he represents two different planes of belief. The two

men on the way to Emmaus are an illustration of the Pauline belief. They do not recognise Jesus "after the flesh," but their hearts burn within them as new interpretations are given to the Scriptures. Finally, they recognise him in the breaking of bread and then he vanishes. They have been led to their belief by the way of theology and a vision. This is the Pauline method. The eleven, on the contrary, are made the ecclesiastical authorities for a physical resurrection. They see the wounds, feel the flesh, and Jesus eats broiled fish. This was the sort of evidence which a later generation wanted and by means of it the belief in a physical resurrection was established. Luke completes the legends of Easter Day by relating that Jesus "led them out until they were over against Bethany: and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven." The same author, who wrote Luke's Gospel, afterwards wrote the Acts of the Apostles, in which he states that Jesus appeared to the apostles "by the space of forty days," after which he was "taken up." Either the words in the Gospel—"and was carried up into heaven"—are a later interpolation, or the author of the "Acts" forgot what he had written in the Gospel. They are not in some manuscripts, but, even if they are omitted, this passage states that Jesus "parted from them," which is in conflict with the later statement in the Book of the Acts. By the time the Book of the Acts was written the Christians had increased greatly in numbers and had acquired a form of organisation which, following the precedent set by Paul, they had learned to call the "Church." They had also begun to imagine that the "Church" was identical with the

Kingdom of God, which had formed the burden of the preaching of Jesus. As the new organisation was very early flooded with a great variety of doctrines, theories, traditions, and observances, coming from many sources, it became necessary to discover some authority which should decide what was true and what was proper.

The apostles seemed to be the natural authority as to the teaching of Jesus, but, as he had taught no dogmas, established no rules, and appointed no ritual during his life, there was no source for even apostolic authority for these things. It therefore became necessary to imagine that Jesus had taken some time after his resurrection for the instruction of the apostles in "the things concerning the Kingdom of God," by which men understood the dogma and ritual of the Church. Forty was a familiar Jewish round number derived from Babylonian theories and the forty days between the Passover and Pentecost were convenient and seemed sufficient for the purpose. Hence arose the story contained in the Book of the Acts, and the supposed instructions during those forty days have been very dear to the ecclesiastical mind for eighteen centuries. That the account contradicts Luke's statement in the Gospel and that Paul, who had heard many accounts of visions, but none at all about instructions, knew nothing of it, show that it is later in its origin and entirely fictitious. Some effort was made in still later days to partly overcome the incongruity between the Gospel and the Book of the Acts by eliminating from the former the words "and was carried up into heaven," and many modern scholars do not admit their genuineness. But, whether these words be accepted or not, the incongruity remains, for the Gospel relates the final

disappearance of Jesus on Easter Day and the Book of the Acts not until forty days later.

*Matt. xxviii, 11-20*

The author of the first Gospel states that the story of the guard and that the disciples stole the body of Jesus while the soldiers slept, was current in his day—that is, eighty or ninety years after the supposed event. If it had been current much before his day, some of the earlier writers, Paul, or Mark, or the author of the third Gospel, would have mentioned it, but, as there is no earlier suggestion of such an occurrence, it becomes evident that it is a late attempt to meet an objection to the prevalent Christian belief, which had grown up among the Jews living in foreign lands. There was no longer any means of proving or disproving any such statement, but one affirmation was met by another. Some of the Jews said that the disciples had stolen the body, to which the Christians replied that it was impossible, because there had been a guard. To this the Jews replied that the guard was probably asleep when the disciples stole the body, and to this the Christians answered that they were bribed by the priests to say that they were asleep and that while they slept the theft was committed.

The story is full of naïve and impossible details. If there had been a guard at all and they had anything to report, they would have reported to their commanding officer and not to the priests, nor would any amount of money have sufficed to induce soldiers under any sort of discipline, such as the Roman discipline was, to report that they had slept while on guard duty, since no influence of priests would have availed to

save their lives. Moreover, inasmuch as the soldiers had become as "dead men" from fear of the angel, whose "appearance was as lightning and his raiment white as snow," their evidence as to what happened while in that condition would have had no value. The account of the guard is without historical foundation. Matthew brings his Gospel to an end with a piece of free composition in the interest of the rapidly-growing ecclesiastical organisation. The suggestion for it was found in the statement in Mark's Gospel that the disciples would *see* Jesus in Galilee, which, in its turn, was the outgrowth of the fact that at least the earliest visions were had in Galilee. On this basis, Matthew gave his imagination free rein and wrote what seemed to him the probable result of an interview of Jesus with "the eleven." He is particular to specify "the eleven," because in his day the original apostles had become the source of authority for the beliefs and practices which were becoming established in the Church. There is no thought any more of a spiritual vision, no seeing of a glorified body on a heavenly throne, but an actual seeing of the physical body of Jesus, who comes towards them and speaks. He says that "some doubted," but does not say that Jesus did anything to dispel the doubt. According to him, Jesus is not so anxious to prove the fact of his resurrection as he is to bestow the remarkable commission, which is to establish the power of the clergy over the belief, conduct, and worship of the Christians. He is made to declare that he has received all authority in heaven and on earth, which he proceeds to exercise by commissioning "the eleven" to go and make disciples of all nations, by baptising them in the name of the Trinity and teaching them certain observances, prom-

ising to be with them, "the eleven," to the end of the world. This is an amazing transformation of the teaching of Jesus, or rather the substitution for his teaching of something entirely contrary to it. There is no longer any thought of a Kingdom of God, which is to come very soon and suddenly, no longer any thought of preparation for it by a moral transformation, an enlargement of faith and hope and an increase of love, no longer any suggestion of a spontaneity of righteousness, which shall be like a fountain springing up in the individual heart. In place of all the simple and wonderful teaching of Jesus, discipleship has become a mere mechanism and formality. "The eleven" are to "make disciples" by baptising them in the name of a new, mysterious, metaphysical God, of whom Jesus had never heard, nor anyone else until long after the end of the first century. There is no evidence of the use of this formula in baptism before the year 130 A.D., nor did it become general until late in the second century. Before at least the year 120 A.D. baptisms were "in the name of Jesus Christ, to which custom Paul refers in the words (Gal. iii, 27)—"As many of you as were baptised into Christ." The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have suppressed "Our Father" of whom Jesus taught, and baptism, which Jesus never practised, commended, nor appointed, has become the magical rite of admission to an institution which he neither founded nor anticipated. The disciples who are to be made in this mechanical way are to be taught to "observe things," to practise such rites and ceremonies as those in authority may be pleased to impose from time to time, while the slavery to authority is to be perpetual, for Jesus is represented as promising to be with them, "the eleven," to the end of the world. As

all of "the eleven" were dead when this was written, it is evident that the germ of apostolic succession was already developed in the author's mind and that he already thought of the new hierarchy as a divinely-established despotism, destined to exercise an absolute dominion over the bodies and souls of men for all time. It is evident that the account, which represents Jesus as giving sole and supreme authority to Peter, is later than this statement that he bestowed unlimited corporate authority upon "the eleven."

If the Higher Criticism of the Scriptures should confer no other benefit, it would be entitled to the lasting gratitude of the Christian world for showing that the whole of this unfortunate narrative is the latest of all additions to the Gospel and that it is absolutely without foundation except in the ecclesiastical imagination, which weaves its theories for the establishment and defence of power, while the helpless multitude, unable to think and unwilling to learn, willingly accepts any new "yoke of bondage."

*Mark xvi, 9-20*

These verses are a late addition to Mark's Gospel. They do not exist in the best manuscripts, while many authors of the fourth century testify that they were lacking from most manuscripts of their day.

Mark's Gospel terminated very abruptly and it is quite probable that its original ending was suppressed, because it stated things which were out of harmony with beliefs and theories which grew up after the close of the first century. This artificial ending was afterwards made up from extracts from various sources. The first section, 9-14, is made up from the story of

Mary Magdalen, in the fourth Gospel and some legends from Luke's. The second contains the supposed commission from Matthew's Gospel, with the declaration that baptism is the means for acquiring salvation. Then follow deductions from the legends of the apostles, including the harmless drinking of poison by Barsabas, mentioned by Papias about the year 140 A.D.

The account closes with an extract from Luke's Gospel and a conclusion from the supposed saying in Matthew's Gospel—"Lo I am with you always." Thus the artificial character of the addition becomes evident, as well as the complete materialisation of the new religion towards the middle of the second century.

#### THE CONCLUSION

The study of the stories of the resurrection makes it evident that there are two distinct and contradictory accounts: the one preserved by Paul, the other transmitted in the Gospels; the one referring to visions of Jesus in heavenly glory, the other giving incongruous narratives of the restoration of his physical life; the one being of early date and historically true, the other much later and indicating a materialisation of belief and a serious decline from the high spiritual tension which had established a new religion in the world.

It becomes necessary, therefore, in the interest of historical truth, to discard all the stories of a physical resurrection and to recognise the fact that the belief and enthusiasm of the disciples were restored and strengthened by visions, in which they seemed to see Jesus seated upon a throne in heavenly glory. It lies within the province of psychology to explain the



genesis and nature of visions. From hundreds of similar experiences it has become an established fact that thoughts long dwelt upon, feelings long sustained, will produce mental images which seem as clearly objective to the mind as any of the realities of life, as Jeanne d'Arc said to her judges: "Whether it were good or bad spirits, I have seen them. I have seen them as I see you; I have even sometimes put my arms about them." The religious history of the world abounds in accounts of visions, some of them most extraordinary in their distinctness and in their far-reaching effect upon men and nations. Some of the Hebrew prophets—Peter, Paul, and John—Mohammed, Francis of Assisi, Catharine of Siena, Jeanne d'Arc, Martin Luther, are but a few among many who illustrate the effect of visions upon the religious history of the world. If a patient, critical study of all recorded visions were made, it would be found that in all important cases a great religious truth often lay at the basis of the vision, while the setting, the drapery, the details, came from personal experience, local tradition, or popular belief. Applying this rule in the case of the visions of Jesus, we should find, as their fundamental reality, the conviction that he is the absolute and permanent interpreter of the meaning and value of life, the revealer of man to himself as the son and agent and heir of God, and of God to man, as the Father, ever waiting for the awakening of his sons to the consciousness of their divine inheritance.

This was the Gospel of Jesus, inviting to the mental change which disclosed the realities of life, and inciting to the faith which united the son to the Father, in the glad coöperation of love. This was what he had preached, this was what his disciples had believed,

this was what revived in their hearts and would not let them believe that his wonderful interpretation of life could be lost to the world. As this faith revived, it was inevitable that it should take to itself form and colouring from the phantasies, notions, and beliefs belonging to the people and the age. Thus it came about that faith in the continued life and influence of Jesus took in the visions the form of the Messiah in heavenly glory.

It is perfectly evident to any student of religious history that all belief in Jesus and all knowledge of his teaching would have died out with the gradual disappearance of the little coterie of friends who knew and loved him, if they had not been able to preach throughout Palestine that the same Jesus who had been crucified was really the Messiah, because they had seen him in glory. It ought to be equally evident that people of another race, in a distant land and almost nineteen centuries removed in time, do not need the same sort of proofs to enable them to believe in Jesus as appealed to Jews in Palestine so long ago. For us he is our guide and master, by reason of his character and on the internal evidence of his teaching. We need no Jewish fictions, and we believe in him for what he is to us, not for what the Jews imagined him to be, and so we hold the same fundamental faith as sent out the original disciples to convert the Jews and afterwards the world, but without the temporary colouring of Jewish ideas, and would say, as one in early days is reported to have said: "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

## RESULTS AND PROSPECTS

TO those who have followed the preceding study with minds fairly free from prejudice, it will be evident that the Christian religion, as we know it, both in its Catholic and Protestant forms, is not only not identical with the religion of Jesus, but is in many ways directly contrary to it, constituting an obstacle to its free course and its beneficent work among men.

It will be also evident that the result of the Higher Criticism will be not the destruction of religion, but the removal of the obstacles which have kept the religion of Jesus from showing itself as the normal leaven of mankind, in developing the ideals, increasing the joy, and cultivating the intellectual, moral, and spiritual nature of man.

In proportion as the relics of Jewish notions, Oriental superstitions, Greek speculations, Roman legalism, and barbaric imaginings loosen their hold upon the increasing intelligence and knowledge of the world, the Gospel *of* Jesus will take the place long ago usurped by the Gospel *about* Jesus and the world will listen once more to the Good News concerning the Kingdom of God.

For the Kingdom of God, an ideal state of human society actually realised in this world, is the great objective point which a true religion must keep before the minds of men, since it alone offers a practical solution of the problem of existence and supplies a

reason, a purpose, an enthusiasm, and an incentive in life. We are here in this divine world, children of the Infinite Life, put in charge of this magnificent vineyard, that we may help God finish the world and produce in the lives of men and women the intelligence, virtue, sympathy, and grace of a full-grown manhood.

The idea of the Kingdom of God will bear no resemblance to the caricature of it in the old Jewish apocalyptic literature and will be free from such limitations as were unavoidable in the time of Jesus, for men will realise that it cannot come soon, nor suddenly, nor by direct divine intervention, but it must loom grandly in the future as the inevitable and final term in the orderly evolution of mankind.

As individuals, as nations, and as churches we can help or hinder its coming, while the Gospel of Jesus is the appeal to us as individuals to help, to go to work in the divine vineyard, to throw the weight of our personality onto the side of God and to direct our intelligence, our interest, our enthusiasm towards the culture in ourselves and others of the things that are true and beautiful and good.

This is the Gospel which the world will eventually be asked to believe, the Gospel which proclaims the inevitable establishment in this world of a state of society in which all the wonderful possibilities involved in the germ of manhood will have blossomed and borne fruit, and which invites us to help towards the production of that splendid result.

This is the Gospel and the only Gospel which the churches will eventually preach, and in proportion as they do preach it they will stop "declining." We hear much lamentation about their decline, and are told that they have lost the poor and are now losing

the rich and the children. It is all true, but the reasons commonly assigned are not adequate to account for the conditions. The age is not "godless." No age is "godless," except on a small scale and for a short time, for religion is as natural an instinct of the human soul as hunger is of the body, and if the men to-day no longer flock to the churches as their fathers did, it is because the antique food-supply does not satisfy the soul-hunger of the twentieth century, and because the new ferment of life cannot be forced back into the worn-out wine-skins of the past.

People have outgrown the dogmatic theology of the centuries that are gone, and it no longer either frightens the ignorant nor entertains the learned, while so many well-meant efforts of the clergy to convert the tremendous dogmas of other days into harmless symbols and their inventions of pretty allegories for the entertainment of the people yield nothing to arouse the conscience, to awaken the enthusiasm, or to stimulate the efforts of men.

When, however, the churches really believe the Gospel of Jesus themselves and preach it, in place of the tissue of fictions which has hidden it away, they will acquire a new lease of life and become batteries of moral and spiritual power, real power-houses, where men and women and children can go to be recharged with faith, hope, love, and enthusiasm, to be assured that this is a divine world in process of its growth, and that they are here to help God make it a beautiful place, full of beautiful men and women and children.

Then the churches will not be large enough to contain the multitudes which will flock to hear the Good News of the Kingdom of God, for they will unroll the fasci-

nating pictures of the possibilities of life, showing that the most interesting thing in the world is the human race itself, and awakening a new, overwhelming, all-absorbing enthusiasm for humanity, an enthusiasm pervading all classes and blossoming into a realised brotherhood of the divine family, obliterating all artificial distinctions, putting an end to all class antagonisms, rescuing the rich from the waste of time-killing devices, and brightening the hearts of the poor with the glad radiance of hope. For down through the weary ages of ignorance, oppression, and crime will be heard once more the comforting words of Jesus: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst, for they will be filled; blessed are they that mourn, for they will be comforted; blessed are the poor, for theirs is the Kingdom of God"; and men will be as sure as he was that the children of God are not to be allowed to be hungry, or miserable, or wretched anywhere in this great divine vineyard and, believing this, they will set to work intelligently, not for the spasmodic alleviation of suffering, but for the eradication of the causes of poverty.

They will be as sure as he was that in a realised Kingdom of God disease can have no place, and already the efforts of medical science are directed more to its entire prevention than to its occasional cure, without perceiving as yet that this is a logical application and result of the faith and teaching of Jesus.

They will be as sure as he was that vice and crime are evidences of disease and, abandoning the antiquated methods of punishment and repression, they will substitute gardens of righteousness for prison cells, becoming as interested in the culture of the human

vineyard as men are now interested in improving the fauna and flora of the world.

For centuries men have been praying, "Thy Kingdom come," without believing for an instant that the Kingdom of God ever would or could come, since it is a fundamental assumption of popular theology that this world is a hopelessly wicked place and that religion is merely a device to enable a fortunate few to escape from its impending destruction and to be "saved" from the wrath of God.

For centuries men have been praying, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven," never understanding for a moment that the will of God was to be done by them, but imagining the rather that it was something which God would execute upon them, by "taking" someone whom they loved, or inflicting some other grievous calamity, and that their Christian duty was to cultivate "resignation to his blessed will."

But when men believe as they have been taught to pray, and live as they believe, either the churches will be overwhelmed by the multitudes asking for light, guidance, and inspiration, or the vineyard will be let out to other husbandmen, who will allow and assist it to produce its normal fruits. For, if a multitude should suddenly believe the Gospel of Jesus and awake to find themselves members of a divine household, charged with the splendid responsibility of helping God in the culture of the human race, there would be such an unlocking of the elemental forces of the souls of men as would shake civilisation to its foundations.

Forces are dangerous things, except when guided by intelligence and restrained by power. It is a wise provision of Nature, therefore, that the sluggishness of the average mind should act as a brake upon the

exuberance of unintelligent faith. But, while the progress of mankind towards the great religion of the future must be slow, it is nevertheless sure, and it becomes the privilege and duty of those whose faith and foresight make them prophetic of the dawn to provide, as far as may be, those agencies which shall handle wisely the greater forces of the souls of men, lest misdirected zeal should encumber the world with the wreckage of wild experiments, and the most promising enthusiasms exhaust themselves in the consuming fires of fanaticism.

Back of all the churches, or of whatever organisation may take their place, if they shall prove unequal to their larger mission among men, there will be great Research Bureaus, composed of men of scholarly attainments, trained powers of observation, and entire freedom from prejudice, for the patient investigation of all questions which concern the well-being of mankind, for the gradual elucidation of the problems of poverty, labour, the equalising of the burdens of life, health, crime, parenthood, childhood, education, finance, and government, for these are the matters in which everyone will be interested, since they concern the coming of the Kingdom of God.

It will be the mission of the churches, if they shall be found worthy, aside from kindling a fire in human hearts, to instruct the multitude as to the findings of the Research Bureaus upon the problems of life and then, abolishing the little garden plots of sectarian fads and theological delusions, to organise the people of a city for intelligent and systematic work towards making their fraction of the vineyard of God a City Beautiful, in the sweet, gentle, righteous, joyful, helpful, faithful lives of all its citizens.



The greatest thing that could happen in this world to-day would be for men to learn really to believe in God as our actual divine Father, whose very life pulsates in our blood, throbs in our hearts, moves in our sympathies, blossoms in our loves, perceives and thinks in our minds, and struggles ever to become the living fountain of grace, righteousness, and joy in all of us.

For the majority to-day, as in all past ages, God is little more than a name for the terrors of the unknown, a sort of dark background of calamity, against which men need protection; but when a goodly number shall learn to know God as He "in whom we live and move and have our being," they will be lifted at once onto the higher plane of the conscious dignity, value, and possibilities of manhood, and will find within themselves the solution of the greatest of all problems which is to-day troubling a multitude of men, most of whom do not confess it even to their dearest friends,—the question of their own immortality. For it will be the natural corollary from their larger faith in God that the children of the Infinite Life inherit and share their Father's immortality, and that the stopping of the activity of physical functions simply sets free the soul for a more satisfactory growing in the larger household of God.

The prospect of religion and humanity is magnificent beyond all conception; for, as sure as there is a God in the universe, so sure is his victory in this vast process of the training of a human race; but God is dependent upon men. He has put them in charge of the vineyard, and must work in them and through them and by them, since the whole process of the higher evolution of mankind is a moral and intellectual process working from within outward. The greatest force operating

towards the divine result will be the actual belief of the Gospel of Jesus, which portrays the divine Kingdom as the goal of humanity, and would enlist the best energies of men for an intelligent and organised struggle against the obstacles which delay its coming,—the ignorance, superstition, selfishness, and passion inherited from the cruder ages of mankind.

The time will surely come when the whole religious world will be filled with gratitude and joy for the emancipation, which the Higher Criticism is working, from the blunders of the past, and in some future century the clergy and the laity, delivered from traditional beliefs, whether of Jewish or pagan origin, will acquire and teach and illustrate a living faith, sharing with Jesus his actual love of God and man, entering with enthusiasm into his expectation of the Kingdom of God, and letting their light so shine before men that they may see their good works and glorify their Father in heaven.

Is there any question as to what we are to teach the boys?

We certainly will not befog their minds by teaching them the Jewish religion. When they are old enough to appreciate the interesting record of the growth of a people from fetichism to a well-developed spiritual consciousness among the few, we will teach them *about* the Jewish religion, but not after the manner of the Sunday-schools.

Nor will we teach them the Christian religion as a creed, a dogmatic system, a ritual, a conformity, or a submission to priestly authority and power.

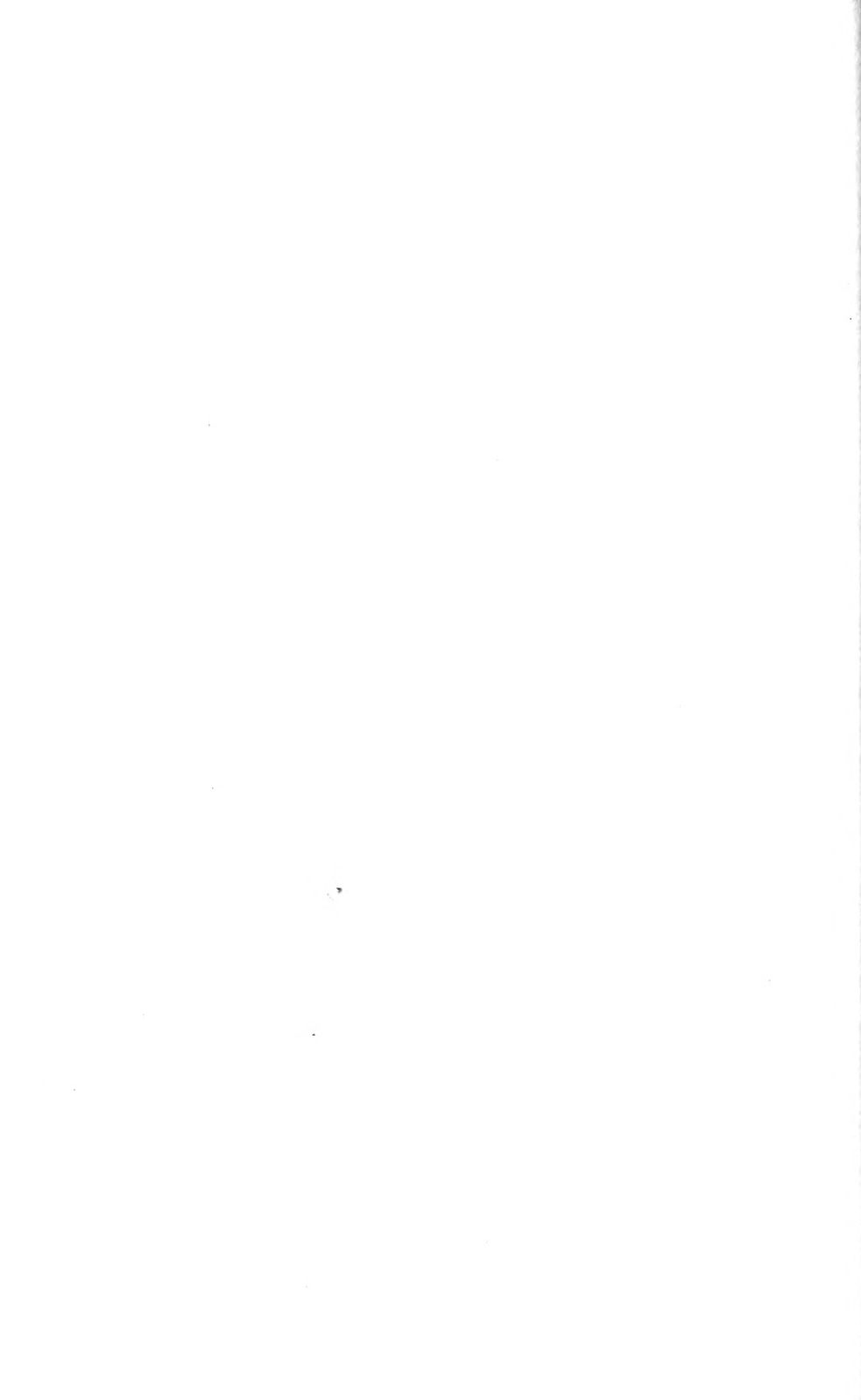
We will teach them the rather the religion of Jesus as the light and joy and power of life.

We will teach them that they are individual mani-

festations of the life of God, that the power to think and feel and love and act is the very essence of their Father's life throbbing in their souls, that it is their privilege, drawing courage, sustenance, and power from the Infinite Fountain of life, to grow by that they feed upon, developing the beauty of the body and the soul, cultivating the perceptions and reason of the mind, that they may enter upon their divine inheritance in the knowledge of the truth, raising a harvest of those graces of character which are the normal adornment of the Sons of God.

We will teach them that the chief purpose of life is to serve God by serving humanity, and that their supreme duty, as stewards of this splendid divine estate, is to seek first the Kingdom of God, making their lives a positive contribution towards the victory of the things which lead to righteousness and peace and joy, to faith and hope and love.

Thus we shall equip them grandly for the work of life, for we shall have taught them the religion of Jesus. It is the real thing and it is enough. God bless them!

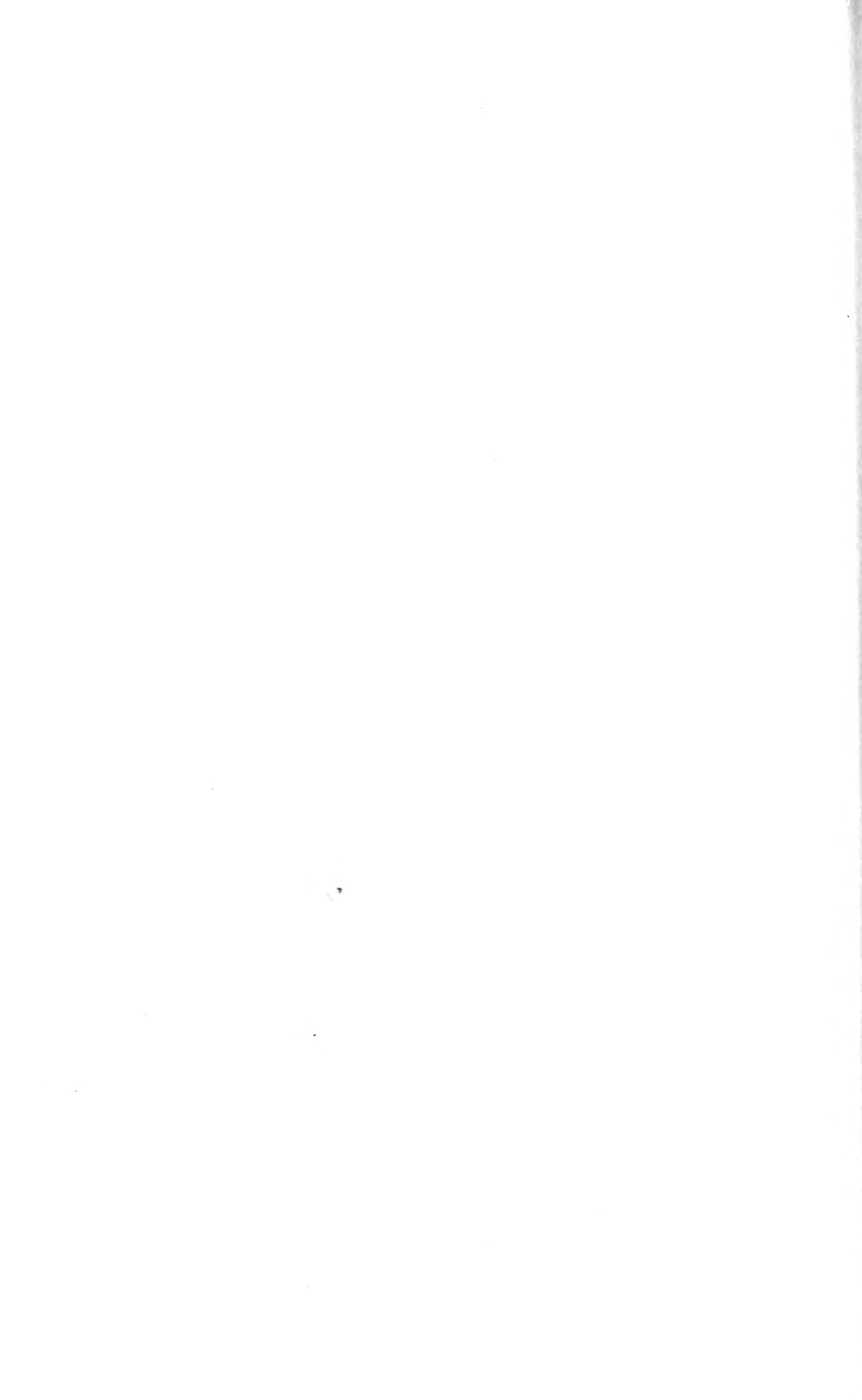


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